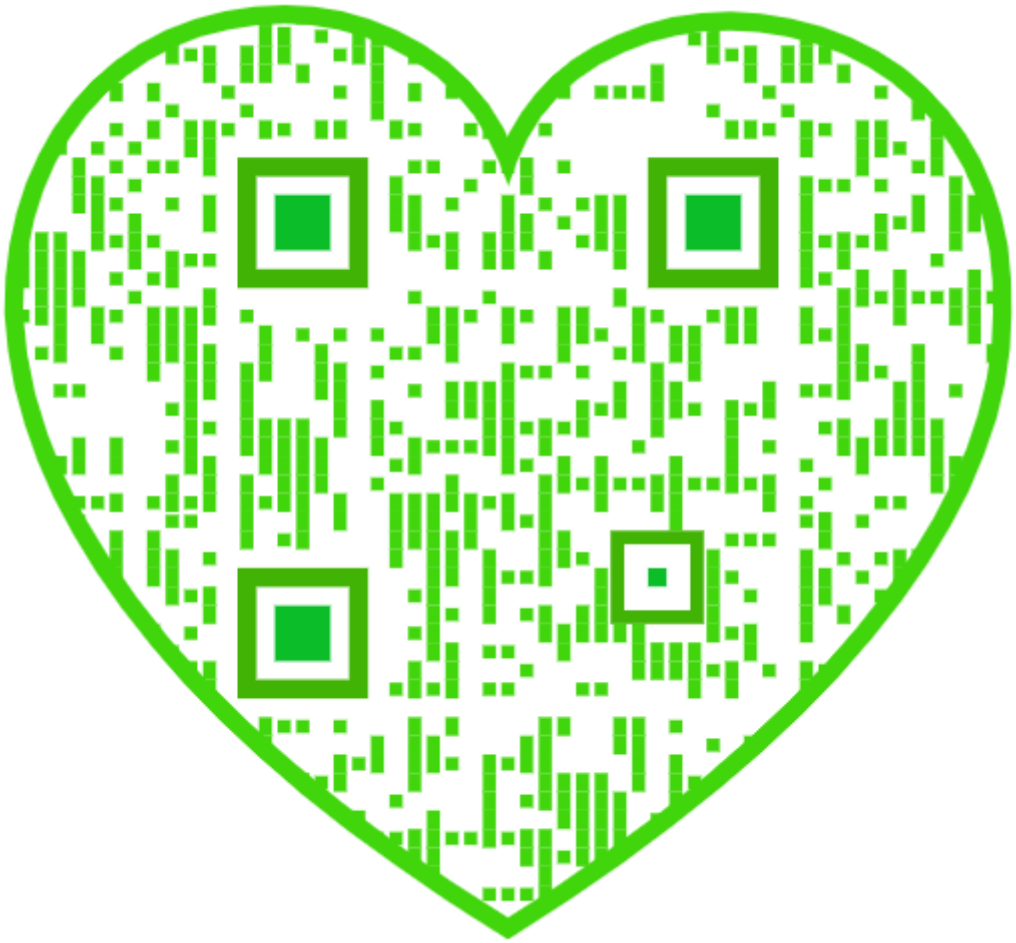

FIFTY YEARS

OF

IRISH JOURNALISM

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BY

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PREFACE.

A PORTION of the following pages was written during the nine months—excepting the brief "vacation" intervals—which I spent at the Parnell Commission in London. The Court sat four days each week, sometimes only three, and this gave me a good deal of spare time which I utilised in writing portions of these reminiscences. People in every part of Ireland have repeatedly said to me "Why don't you write your reminiscences?" My answer, speaking generally, for the last twenty years, has been that I had not time. Recently, however, I have had occasional short periods of leisure in which I have been enabled to complete my self-imposed task.

I am well aware that the narrative is very much of a personal nature, but possibly it may prove of some interest as a picture of journalistic life in Ireland during the troublous times to which it relates.

This work makes no pretension to being a history of the period which it covers. A very fair idea of that history might, I think, be gathered from the newspapers of the time, and possibly, for the period from 1867 to 1889 during which I was correspondent, and, frequently, the special correspondent of *The Daily News*, that journal may be found to contain as good a summary as exists. I know that I was the most energetic of all the Irish correspondents of the London papers during those years.

I have not attempted to adhere to chronological order, which I consider would not have been suitable for the general plan of the work.

In every instance, unless otherwise stated, or implied, the incidents are described from personal observation. In a large number of cases, I was the sole journalist present; and the result was that in those cases the information supplied to the newspaper which I represented was exclusive. This applies in the fullest sense to all the "special correspondence" which represented a very large proportion of the author's labours from 1875 to 1889, and from that time on a considerable, though a smaller, proportion.

I have not altogether avoided politics, but I have tried to avoid partisanship, believing as I do that no system of Government could be more pernicious than the present system of Government by Party.

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CHAPTER I.

My First Engagement.

The title Fifty Years of Irish Journalism is not a misnomer. For the first two years of the fifty my contributions were those of an amateur. In 1857 I contributed five rather lengthy articles to a newspaper in the North of Ireland—*The Coleraine Chronicle*—on a subject which was not a popular one then, and which cannot yet be said to be so, but which, for me, had then, and still has a great fascination —Political Economy. It was the time of the Manchester Cotton Famine of 1857, and amongst the special topics then being discussed, especially in *The Economist*, was the advisability of suspending the Bank Act, that is to say, suspending the provision which limited the issue of notes by the Bank of England to £14,000,000, save in so far as gold was held against them. I strongly opposed the proposed suspension, contending that no good object could be served thereby; that there was ample money in circulation to carry on all legitimate trading; and that if the practice was

adopted of suspending the Bank Act whenever a so-called financial crisis arose, it would encourage a state of things which would multiply financial crises, and render the suspension a matter of frequent occurrence. The other topic—the Cotton Famine—I dealt with in another way. I pressed, as strongly as I could, that no man, or woman either, should be altogether dependent on any one particular industry by which to earn a living. Division of labour, I admitted, was on the whole a great boon, but it had its drawbacks, which became obvious the moment any large industry was, from any cause, crippled; and the danger was all the greater if the industry was one which was carried on, as the cotton-weaving industry was, chiefly in one or two districts. I have never ceased, when opportunity has offered, to enforce the views on these points which I then advocated.

Before I came to Ireland (in December, 1856) I had contributed to some of the Glasgow newspapers, over my own name, and I had also written and published in Glasgow a couple of pamphlets on the temperance question.

My connection with journalism as a profession dates from 1862 when I joined *The Wexford Constitution* as a reporter. For my appointment on that journal I was largely indebted to the then proprietor and editor of *The Coleraine Chronicle*—Mr. M'Combie. The salary offered was small, but I would have accepted it had it been but five shillings a week so strong was the

faith I had in my ability to force myself eventually into a fairly good position on the Press.

In 1862 the route to Wexford, from Dublin, was by rail to Wicklow, and thence by a well-appointed four-in-hand to Wexford. A drive of sixty-four miles on the box-seat of such a conveyance on a fine August day, through the picturesque scenery of the famous Vale of Avoca, was most enjoyable and invigorating. The pace varied from ten to twelve miles an hour, and Wexford was reached shortly after four in the afternoon. The Slaney—at this point a wide and deep river—was crossed, to the southern side of the town, by the "old" bridge, long since disestablished, and which indeed was then about to be superseded by the present structure. When I left Wexford three years later the railway had been completed as far as Enniscorthy. The late Mr. John E. Redmond (uncle of Mr. John Redmond, M.P., the present leader of the Irish Nationalist Party) then M.P. for the borough of Wexford, started a movement for constructing a line twelve miles in length, between Enniscorthy and Wexford, but the proposal came to nothing. A few years later the Dublin and Wicklow Company extended the line to Wexford, and it was subsequently extended to New Ross and Waterford.

Before applying for the reportership on *The Wexford Constitution* I had, of course, taught myself—I never got a single lesson—to write shorthand, knowing that to be the "open sesame" to journalistic work.

A few days after my arrival in Wexford my competency as a shorthand writer was put to a severe test—the reporting of an agricultural dinner at Enniscorthy, the speakers including the two members for the County, Mr. John George (afterwards a judge of the King's Bench in Ireland) and Mr. M'Mahon, the one a Conservative and the other a Liberal. At that period these annual gatherings of landlords and tenants at the festive board were regarded as occasions of much greater importance than at present. Indeed, the custom has now fallen almost altogether into abeyance; but at the time I refer to the dinners afforded an opportunity to the Members of Parliament to give an "account of their stewardship," and to the farmers to grumble at the treatment meted out to them by the landlords. What made the occasion especially trying to me was that the editor (who was also the proprietor of the paper) was sitting at my elbow—a circumstance calculated to increase my very natural nervousness, and possibly thereby to reduce my shorthand speed. Nevertheless, I came out of the ordeal successfully. Three other similar functions—at Gorey, New Ross and Wexford—followed in rapid succession. When the turn of Wexford came I performed a feat which eclipsed, as I was told, anything of the kind ever previously accomplished in Wexford. *The Constitution* was published twice a week, nominally on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, but, in reality, unless on rare occasions, on the evenings of Tuesday and Friday.

The Wexford Show was held on Tuesday, and, unaided, I produced in time for Wednesday morning's issue a report of over five columns, consisting of a column of descriptive matter, two columns of the prize list, and over two columns, in very small type, of the speeches at the dinner held in the evening. When the proprietor of *The Independent*—the principal rival journal, also published on Wednesday and Saturday mornings—met me next day he warmly congratulated me, and added that it would save *The Independent* the trouble of having its own report of the dinner written out for Saturday's issue.

Before joining the press professionally I used to sit down and write straight on, without notes, having previously thought out my subject, more or less. As, within ten days of joining *The Constitution*, I was left in sole charge of the paper I felt a greater responsibility, and it was no longer a matter of writing or not as I pleased. I had often felt that when walking out I could think more rapidly and work out in my own mind more readily the salient points of a subject. I very soon took the hint which this knowledge gave me, and I frequently walked out towards Ferrycarrig Bridge—a beautiful walk along the right bank of the Slaney—and as I walked I jotted down, as they occurred to me, the points of the article for the next issue of the paper. I am of course satisfied that I was by no means the first who adopted this practice, but the mention of it here may be of use to some budding journalist.

The proprietor, Mr. Alexander Mackey—a Scotsman, I need hardly say—had, previous to my arrival, written all the leading articles, but from that time down to the close of my connection with the paper he wrote only one or two, not more. The articles I wrote included several advocating the establishment of a short sea route to England, *via* Rosslare and Milford Haven. It is a somewhat curious coincidence, that over forty years later I should have been the first to describe, in *The Irish Times*, the new railway line from Waterford to Rosslare (for the Fishguard route), while yet it was not altogether completed. This had to be accomplished, first, by driving six or eight miles on a car from Waterford, and then walking along some miles of the line which was in course of construction. This necessitated walking through a good deal of mud, leaping from sleeper to sleeper (in the parts where the sleepers had been laid), and, in one part, walking through a tunnel where, as elsewhere, pools of water had to be avoided, and this without the aid of light, natural or artificial. In some cases the pools had to be crossed by walking on a very narrow plank. Farther on we had to cross, in a ferry boat, the Barrow, here a very wide and deep river, near the point where it falls into the sea. The fine bridge, which the trains now cross, was then nearing completion ; from the ferry boat an excellent view was obtained of the huge structure, erected at a great elevation above the level of the river. Having walked along the line a mile or two on the

Wexford side of the river, the remainder of the journey was completed by travelling on a small locomotive along the line itself to Wellington Bridge Station, from which we were conveyed to Wexford in one of a number of motor cars which Mr. M'Alpine, a member of the Glasgow firm of contractors, had in use as a quick means of travelling when inspecting the progress of the construction of the line.

At this point I may perhaps mention that in the village school, eight miles south of Glasgow, where I received nearly all my education, English composition formed no part of the curriculum, save when we had to translate Latin into English. Latin, Greek and Hebrew, as well as Euclid, were all efficiently taught, but English composition we had to pick up without the aid of any formal exercises or instruction; and most of us did pick it up, at least to our own satisfaction. We were taught to read; a matter very much neglected now in Primary Schools. Our reading included choice extracts from the best English authors, and I am inclined to think that this system is an excellent one, provided the student is anxious to learn, and realises that he can learn composition in that way. After I left school I was a voracious reader, especially of newspapers, and to this habit I have no doubt I owe much of my subsequent success as a journalist. When I was about fifteen years old I already took, or imagined I took, a deep interest in politics. I was, as at that time and since,

like the vast majority of Scotsmen, a Liberal. I attended political meetings of all kinds, and non-political meetings as well. I heard Edward Miall and J. Carvell Williams, both afterwards Members of Parliament, " holding forth " in the very early fifties on the Anti-State Church question to an audience which filled the Glasgow City Hall, holding four thousand people ; I was present on the 15th of October, 1851, in the afternoon, when Louis Kossuth addressed a crowded meeting in the same building, and I well remember how much I was struck with his noble bearing, and his great command of the English language. I heard J. B. Gough, the great American temperance orator, speak frequently in the same hall ; and I attended night after night a discussion which occupied five or six nights, in the same place, on " Secularism *versus* Christianity," between the Rev. Brewin Grant and Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, both of whom are dead—Grant a long time ago, and Holyoake a few years since. One other was Father Gavazzi the great Italian orator. I heard Gavazzi several times, once at least when he could only speak in Italian, and subsequently when he was able to speak fluently in English.

At this period I spent a good deal of my time in the news room of the Glasgow Athenæum, especially in the evenings. That institution was supplied with telegraphic reports of the proceedings in Parliament up to ten o'clock at night, at which hour the room was closed. It was not open on Sunday so I frequently

spent a good portion of that day in a news room in Glassford Street reading *The Times*, the weeklies, the monthly magazines—Blackwood's, Fraser's, Tait's and Sharpe's (of these only Blackwood's survives)—and the more ponderous quarterlies—*The Edinburgh Review*, *The Quarterly Review* and others. This course of reading was, I think, a helpful preparation for journalism. In addition to that, Sunday was in part devoted to reading at home what my father called "secular" journals, for which I subscribed—*The Examiner*, *The Spectator* and *The Saturday Review*. My father, a somewhat strict Presbyterian, objected to my reading those journals on the "Sabbath" day; I lived to see him read the secular newspapers on Sunday, apparently without the slightest qualm of conscience. His ideas on that subject had changed; this, I think I may say, was typical of what had taken place all over Scotland within the quarter of a century which had elapsed in the interval.

Going back a few years to the time before I left my native village, Eaglesham, the name is said to have been originally Eagle's Home or Hame, I cannot help drawing a contrast between the Eaglesham of that day and the Eaglesham of the present time. Then the village, having a little over a thousand inhabitants, was a uniquely picturesque one—a fact which is my only excuse for mentioning it. Situated on high ground, about five hundred feet above the level of the sea, and consequently about the same height above the city of

Glasgow which it overlooks, it consisted of two rows of houses facing each other, each about half-a-mile in length and separated by a "Common" fully two hundred and fifty yards wide at the lower end of the town, and gradually tapering until, at the top, the two rows of houses were only about thirty yards apart. The upper part of the "Common"—about one-third—was planted, while the lower part was in grass, with a tree here and there. A stream of considerable volume derived from three or four inland lakes of considerable extent—"dams" they were called—ran through the centre of the plantation. At the point where the plantation ceased, there was a mill-pond with a mill-race running under cover about one hundred and twenty yards to a large cotton-spinning factory which filled the widest part of the ravine—for such it was and is at this point—in the centre of the "Common." The village was rather a go-a-head one. It had, as early as 1842, a supply of gas, but owing to the changes that have taken place lately this gas supply has ceased to exist. The principal industry was that of hand-loom weaving. There is not now a single hand-loom in the village, the spinning factory having been burnt down; and the village has become a sanatorium.

Eaglesham, besides being the birthplace of the author of "The Course of Time," produced one man of more than local celebrity, William Gemmell, a self-taught sculptor, whose greatest work was "The Cottar's

Saturday Night," a remarkably well executed group of the characters described by Burns in his immortal poem. Gemmell was by trade a carpenter, and in his earlier years he and his brother John worked together at that trade. William, however, in the early forties resolved to try what he could do as a sculptor, and worked as such for some years in the carpenter's shop ; eventually the villagers were astonished to learn that Gemmell had produced the group already mentioned. The matter had been kept a profound secret, the inhabitants generally being quite ignorant of the fact until the group was finished. The villagers, of whom I—a boy at school—was one, were invited to see it, and I need not say all were proud of Gemmell's success. The group was, after a time, removed to Glasgow and exhibited in a booth at Glasgow Fair and subsequently in London and elsewhere. Gemmell did not rest satisfied with "The Cottar's Saturday Night" ; he produced several other pieces of sculpture, including "Hawkie," a well-known Glasgow street "character," who moved about with the aid of crutches, and at street corners delivered himself of his views on things in general—social, commercial and political. Gemmell also produced a statue of "Highland Mary," and another of "The Village Blacksmith." On my last visit to the village about six years ago I inquired for Gemmell's works, and found them all except "The Cottar's Saturday Night" group stored in a disused hall.

I enquired about the principal group, and was informed that it was in Berlin.

I was one of a small Committee appointed to manage the Saturday Evening Concerts established in, I think, 1854 by the Glasgow Abstainers' Union. Two of my colleagues on the Committee were Mr. William Walker Scott, afterwards a well-known journalist, and Dr. Norman S. Kerr, who became a distinguished medical man in London. Both died about ten years ago. I may also mention that I was a member of a Temperance Committee on which I had as a colleague Mr. William Collins, the founder of the well-known publishing house. The Concerts did not pay for about a couple of months, but then the tide turned and they became a great success. The Chairman, Mr. Neil M'Neill, was a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, better known then as "Covenanters" and supposed to be the strictest and most puritanical of the Presbyterian bodies in Scotland. The concerts were started with a view of affording amusement to the people, and thus helping to keep them out of the public-houses on Saturday nights. To secure this more effectively the concerts were so arranged that the programme was never completed until after eleven o'clock—the hour for closing licensed houses under the Forbes M'Kenzie Act which had just then been passed. This keeping of the audience so late on a Saturday night was commented on by the ultra-Sabbatarians, but Mr. M'Neill, "covenanter" though

he was, grappled with the point in a very neat way. He said one evening, before the concert began, that the fourth commandment did say "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," but it also said "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work"—a defence received with ringing cheers. Among the artists who appeared at that early period of these concerts was Mr. J. L. Toole, who sang several of his popular songs, including "The Ratcatcher's Daughter," "Barbara Allen," and other ditties of the same kind. Toole had not at that time joined the regular stage and was available, then and for some time afterwards, to my personal knowledge, for casual engagements of the kind I have mentioned. The concerts, I understand, are still continued.

"Ah, Robin (Robert), it would be a lang time before I would sing on that." This was the observation made in my presence to my father over sixty years ago. At that time in Scotland rarely was a bargain made or an account paid without the whiskey bottle being produced. At the particular time I now refer to there was a strong movement in favour of Temperance, or rather Teetotalism. Some, however, and my father was one of them, compounded by substituting wine for whiskey. The wine, then recently introduced, was Marsala, and on the occasion in question the visitor, who was paying an account, was regaled with a glass of Marsala. He drank it off, without showing a wry face, but immediately used, *verbatim et literatim*, the words

with which this paragraph opens—"Ah, Robin, it would be a lang time before I would sing on that."

It may be news to a considerable number of my readers that in those days the Italian Opera Company which visited Glasgow performed only three times a week. The reason, probably, was that the companies were not so strong numerically as they afterwards became, and that singing six nights a week was considered too exhausting a task, especially for the leading artists. These included Grisi and Mario, and, in later years, Tietjens. I had not the pleasure of hearing either of those great artists at that time. My spare funds could not afford opera prices; the most I could achieve was a seat in the pit of the Theatre Royal at a dramatic entertainment. There I had frequently the good fortune to witness the performances of Helen Faucit, Miss Glyn, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mathews, and other celebrated actors and actresses. A curious incident occurred in connection with one of the visits of Charles Mathews, the younger. For a week or two before the time fixed for his visit, the dead walls of Glasgow—there were at that time no hoardings—were covered with placards bearing simply the one word "unique." The object of the advertiser was of course to arouse curiosity as to the explanation of the word, when that explanation should be vouchsafed. Before this was forthcoming however placards bearing the words "Cool as a Cucumber, or Quite Unique" were posted all

over the city. "Cool as a Cucumber" was the title of one of Mathews' favourite pieces. The owner of the haberdashery establishment who had been first in the field with his "unique" placard was furious, and lost no time in informing the public that his cryptic advertisement was intended as the name of a shirt, which he alleged would be superior as regards its fitting qualities to anything of the kind previously produced. Probably both parties benefited by the rival placards.

Charles Mathews left no successor. David Fisher, senior, came nearest to him; and in one of the great comedian's parts—Mr Affable Hawk, in the "Game of Speculation; or, Sparrow, Hawk and Pigeon," a play so eminently suitable for the present time—left nothing to be desired even by those who, like myself, had seen the part played by Mathews. I cannot refrain from adding that it is, in my view, much to be regretted that this and other charming plays, together with the short plays of that period, such as are now known as curtain raisers, are not availed of by theatrical managers. The difficulty in the way, I suppose, is the "specialty" system, and the long runs of particular plays. The plays with which Buckstone and his marvellous company, including Mr. Kendal and his wife, then known as Miss Madge Robertson, used to delight playgoers are scarcely ever presented. Even as a means of training actors and actresses, and leading them to acquire versatility the old stock company system was immensely superior to the present one.

One result of that system was that in the larger cities and towns in which there was a theatre there was, as a rule, a good stock company, the members of which were capable of performing creditably all but the chief parts (and even these in not a few cases) in all the popular plays; and amongst the popular plays at that time were included the principal plays of Shakespeare, and those also of James Sheridan Knowles (including "The Love Chase" and "Virginius"), as well as Sheridan's comedies. Time after time during my residence in Glasgow—from 1848 to 1856—I had the good fortune to see Helen Faucit in "As You Like It" and many other Shakesperian dramas, as well as in "King René's Daughter," and she was in every instance well-supported by the stock company, which then included Mr. David Fisher, the elder Lloyd (Arthur Lloyd's father), and other highly capable actors and actresses. The "travelling company" was at that time unknown, so far at least as high-class theatres were concerned. As I have suggested, it is, in my opinion, very doubtful whether the stage has gained by the change.

Wexford has always been a quiet county. It was so in 1862, and it is so still. Even the land agitation had little effect on its tranquillity. At the time of which I speak the life of a journalist in Wexford was rather uneventful. There was during my sojourn there only one big lawsuit. It was an action of ejectment on the title for the recovery of the Tintern Abbey estate, the

property of the Colclough family. It is situated a few miles south of New Ross. The owner in possession was Mr. John T. Rosborough Colclough, and the claimant was Mr. Patrick Sarsfield Colclough. A big Bar was engaged on each side, and preparations were made for a big fight. The trial, which took place at the Assizes, collapsed however before the end of the first day's hearing, the plaintiff's case having hopelessly broken down—how, I cannot now exactly recall, further than that it failed on the question of pedigree.

During my stay in Wexford I had occasion to attend the execution of a man named Kelly for the murder of a schoolmaster named Fitzpatrick. It was the first execution I was called on to attend as a journalist, and, according to Haydn's "Dictionary of Dates," it was the last public execution in Ireland. It took place on the 11th of August, 1863, and the Act abolishing public executions was not passed until 1868. The scaffold was, in accordance with custom, erected in front of the jail. The large open space there was fairly well filled by spectators, but not by any means crowded. I was admitted within the prison and walked at the rear of the procession until I got within a yard or two of the trap-door. Kelly, who was a heavy man, walked firmly, but without any appearance of bravado, to the scaffold. The preliminaries occupied but a few seconds; the bolt was drawn and the body dropped instantly out of sight. The shock which this gave me was a novel experience on my part. The public in

front saw the same sight, but the body was in their view from first to last, and I take it that this would rather mitigate the sensation as compared to that conveyed to those assembled in the corridor inside the prison. I had occasion subsequently to witness a number of private executions, including the execution in Galway of the three Maamtrasna murderers; but the shock was not so great as on the occasion I have described, a circumstance which I attribute to the difference in the point of view from which they were witnessed.

CHAPTER II.

Migration to Dublin.

On leaving Wexford I went to Limerick, having received an appointment on *The Limerick Chronicle*, one of the oldest papers in Ireland. It completed its hundredth anniversary during the three months I was connected with it. My stay being so very brief, there is little of interest to record, even if, at this distance of time, I could recall it. Within the three months, however, there was a bye-election for a Member of Parliament, whether for the city or the county I cannot now say. There was a contest, and one at least of the two aspirants had been a candidate at a previous election, with what success I cannot recall. A meeting was held in a hall in the city, not a very large one, and amongst the speakers was a local solicitor, Mr. O'Donnell, who in the course of his speech was denouncing the candidate to whom he was opposed. A voice immediately shouted out "you supported him last time." Mr. O'Donnell replied "Yes, I did; God forgive me." A few minutes later the platform—about two

feet higher than the auditorium—gave way, and the occupants, including the writer, were lowered a couple of feet. Fortunately the floor underneath was strong enough, and nobody was a bit the worse.

I learned during this election that at that time the local newspapers had a good harvest at election times. Not only were the addresses of the candidates published as advertisements at a shilling a line ; these advertisements being continued during the entire electioneering period—a period much longer than at present—but everything written and published in favour of a candidate, be it leading article or letter, was charged and paid for at the same rate as the advertisements. A paper published three times a week, therefore, made a good thing out of an election. In Wexford I was told that some proprietors of local newspapers calculated on the income from this source to enable them to "live" from one election to the succeeding one. I may add that the owner of a Wexford paper informed me that he was very frequently asked to draft complimentary addresses, and, still more strange, to draft the replies. He added "Of course you may be sure I made both address and reply as long as possible."

At the end of the three months I received an invitation to join the reporting staff of the Dublin *Daily Express*. Within six weeks I received, unsolicited, a substantial increase of salary. The chief of the staff on handing me the increased salary asked why I did not apply for the increase through him. I replied

that not only did I not apply for it, but that I had not even heard of it till that moment. In less than a year I was offered and accepted the position of Sub-Editor. There was at that time, and for a good number of years afterwards, only one Sub-Editor on each of the four Dublin morning papers. The work was not only somewhat lighter than it became a few years later when the Government took over the Telegraphs, but it was also of a somewhat different character. The hours were practically from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m.; a very large portion of the paper was filled with cuttings from the London and other newspapers. The telegraphing of news was then in the hands of the Magnetic Telegraph Company (by agreement with the Electric Telegraph Company) who gathered the news as well as telegraphed it to the subscribing newspapers; and as the total telegraphic matter did not average two columns a night—indeed it rarely exceeded that amount unless on a Budget night—the Dublin papers were in the habit of going back on the parliamentary debates and other important news of the preceding night, and on the occasion of important debates in Parliament—Disraeli and Gladstone were then the great stars at Westminster—the Sub-Editor had to cut down the full reports of the speeches, and select the more important passages for publication twenty-four hours after they had appeared in the London papers. This entailed much labour but on the occasions on which Gladstone and Disraeli were debating great issues it was, to me at all

events, a labour of love. I particularly enjoyed the wonderful oratory of Disraeli, and looking back on that period I am strongly of opinion that parliamentary oratory has not improved as the years have gone by.

From 1866 to 1871 I not only performed, without assistance, the duties of Sub-Editor, which included the writing of a summary of the day's news, usually a column in length, but I wrote the second leading article almost every night. When, however, the Telegraphs passed into the hands of the State, and the quantity of "flimsy" to be dealt with increased to an enormous extent, it was no longer possible for me to continue leader-writing. A curious incident occurred in connection with my writing of these articles. I had written them occasionally, from the commencement of my sub-editing period, in the absence of the Editor, Dr. Patton, who was then and for many years afterwards the Dublin correspondent of *The Times*. The duties of this latter position required his attendance every night until an advanced hour in the morning, Friday night excepted, the reason of the exception being that the despatch for Monday's issue of *The Times* did not need to be forwarded until Saturday evening. Dr. Patton accordingly arranged with me that I should write and he should pay me for whatever leaders were necessary outside the principal one on Friday night, and this gradually developed into my having to write almost every night. This continued until a short time after the purchase of the Telegraphs by the Government

when, as I have said, it became impracticable. Strange to say the proprietor of *The Express* (Mr. John Robinson) although he knew that I wrote occasionally only became fully aware of the real facts when the arrangement came to a termination. My sub-editing career came to a close in 1875.

When I resigned that position *The Express* had reached its zenith. It had a larger circulation than at any time before, or I believe since, and for a number of years had earned for its sole proprietor considerably over £5,000 a year—a sum regarded at that time as a very good revenue for a Dublin morning paper.

The first leading article which I wrote for *The Daily Express* was written when I had been about six months on the reporting staff. I mention it for a peculiar reason. I have always been an opponent of the connection between Church and State, and yet I was able most conscientiously to write the article referred to. It was against the Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland. It was suggested by an article in *The Dublin Evening Post* the gist of which was that the funds of the Church on its disestablishment should be available for educational work in Ireland. At that time, and up to the present, the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland would not have any system of education of which religious instruction did not form a part. This accordingly meant that any funds granted for education would virtually amount to an endowment of the Roman Catholic Church, and if a proportionate sum was given to the

various Protestant educational institutions it would be practically a religious endowment all round. In any case the lion's share would go to the Roman Catholics. That was the line I took in the article, which was published in *The Daily Express* the following day, and a handsome honorarium was immediately handed to me. The subsequent course of events amply proved the accuracy of my forecast. Moreover, I failed to see why Ireland was not as well entitled as England to have an established Church. In the same way I do not see on what *principle* the Church in Wales should be disestablished and the Church in England left as it is, save on the extremely dangerous principle that local majorities may disestablish a Church in their own district, a principle which would imply the right to establish another Church.

The period covered by my first ten years on *The Express* included many events of great public interest. In 1865 (while I was still on the reporting staff) came the seizure of *The Irish People* newspaper, and the arrest of James Stephens, John O'Leary, O'Donovan Rossa, Thomas Clark Luby, C. J. Kickham and others; the subsequent escape of Stephens, and the trial of the remainder. I was present at the trials and took part in the reporting of them. The staff was very much undermanned and the heavy work almost knocked me up, and others as well. As a result of this overwork just before Christmas I had an unpleasant experience. I was told off to describe the

first performance of the pantomime at the Theatre Royal. I wrote over a column while suffering from a racking headache.

All who took an official part in those trials—Judges, Barristers, and Solicitors—have passed away, and of the reporters present I am the sole survivor, the last to pass away being Mr. James S. Macartney, who had reported Daniel O'Connell, and who, although over eighty-one years of age, was, up to a few weeks before his death in 1909, an active and accomplished journalist. The prosecution and defence were both ably conducted. Mr. Isaac Butt was leading Counsel for the defence, and he led magnificently. With him I think were Mr. Richard Dowse (afterwards Mr Baron Dowse of the Irish Court of Exchequer), Mr. Sidney (afterwards disbarred in consequence of a verdict relating to a signature on a Bill of Exchange) and others. Mr. Barry, the then Attorney General, and subsequently a Judge of the Queen's Bench, and, later on, one of the Lords Justices of the Court of Appeal, was leading Counsel for the prosecution. Of the prisoners the one who attracted most notice was O'Donovan Rossa. He had a countenance which certainly was not prepossessing, but which indicated a dogged determination. John O'Leary was quite the opposite—a quiet, gentlemanly man ; Kickham, too, who had to hold his ear-trumpet constantly to his ear, may be similarly described. I, many years afterwards, met John O'Leary, on an occasion when I was present by invitation

at a meeting of the "Contemporary Club," which assembled in an upper room at the corner of Grafton Street and College Green. On that occasion—it was in the spring of 1886—Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. C. H. Oldham, Mr. Rolleston, Mr. John O'Leary and others were present. I cannot recall the subject under discussion, but one thing remained very distinctly in my memory, an observation by John O'Leary to the effect that he was a good Liberal, but a very poor Democrat.

The Fenian rising in March, 1867, was the next event of importance. By this time I was in the sub-editorial chair, and consequently had not much to do with outdoor journalism. It was late in the evening before the Dublin newspapers obtained an inkling of what was going on at Tallaght, a very ancient village about five miles from Dublin. It was three o'clock in the morning before the member of the reporting staff who was "on town," and who was by reason of being "on town" responsible for picking up the news, returned to the office. At that period "copy" could be taken up to half-past four, and by that hour a comprehensive and interesting account of the events of the night was in type and the paper ready to go to press. I need not recall what followed, the numerous arrests in different parts of the country, particularly in the Counties of Cork, Tipperary, and Limerick. In the forenoon of the following or rather of the same day, I had an opportunity of viewing from the windows

of the office, which was exceptionally well situated for the purpose, the procession of the men arrested at Tallaght the previous night. They passed down Dame Street to the Lower Castle Yard where a formal preliminary inquiry was held. They were as a whole about the most disreputable looking lot I have ever laid eyes upon. A few of them were drapers' assistants in a large establishment (MacSwiney's) in Sackville Street. The rest of the " rising " of 1867 is a matter of history, and in the position which I then occupied I had no opportunity of taking any part in regard to the trials, save in so far as I kept *The Daily News* posted up in regard to these and all other important events.

The position of a sub-editor does not afford many opportunities for personal reminiscences. One or two incidents however may be mentioned. One night at a very late hour I had a visit from Mr. Parnell ; it was not without difficulty that I got out of him the object of his visit, simple though it was, namely, to arrange for the insertion of his address to the electors of some constituency. He managed to make himself intelligible at last, and the matter was ended by his handing me the advertisement, which I sent up to the printers. I could not help, in later years, contrasting the diffidence of Mr. Parnell on that occasion with his fluency of speech and his dictatorial manner when he had acquired greater self-confidence.

It was about this time, and must have been in connection with Mr. Parnell's candidature for the

representation of County Dublin that "A Great Demonstration," as my report was headed in *The Daily Express*, took place at Terenure, a suburb of Dublin City, but situated in the County. It was held on a Saturday afternoon, or rather it was convened for that time, a circumstance which made it convenient for me to attend in person. A few stragglers—mainly consisting of the promoters of the meeting, and not exceeding a score of persons in all—gathered round a large temporary platform erected for the occasion, in a field quite near the main public road of the district. In fact, everything was ready and all that was wanted was the audience. About half-an-hour was allowed to elapse and still there was no sign of an audience. Eventually the intended Chairman—Rev. Professor Galbraith, a Protestant clergyman who had joined the party of churchmen who, piqued at the disestablishment of the Irish Church, formed the Home Government Association—ascended the platform and announced that Mr. Parnell was unable to attend, being engaged in a "distant part of the country in furthering the cause." The "audience" consisting of about a dozen people—nearly all of them on the platform—then walked away. I had previously noticed a car, on which a gentleman was seated, being driven slowly backwards and forwards on the other side of the boundary hedge, at the far side of the field. When the audience dispersed the vehicle moved forward towards a turn into a laneway from which there was an exit to

the public road. I there met it, and very much to my astonishment saw that the gentleman on the car was Mr. Parnell! He had evidently foreseen the possibility of a fiasco, and accordingly had kept out of sight (as he imagined) until the meeting dispersed.

Here I may mention what occurred with regard to another electioneering address which was also handed to me very late at night. It was brought on behalf of Colonel the Honorable King-Harman by his solicitor, Mr. Brereton. I am not sure, but I am strongly under the impression that the "address" was to the electors of one of the divisions of Dublin. At all events, when Mr. Brereton, with whom I was well acquainted, handed it to me I read it and ventured to suggest the omission of a passage in which the candidate expressed his adhesion to the movement for Home Rule. Mr. King-Harman was one of the handful of Protestants who, like Professor Galbraith, at the time of the disestablishment of the Church, became Home Rulers. I so far impressed Mr. Brereton that he took the document back to his principal to get his consent, if possible, to the omission of the passage I had, in a friendly way, objected to, but on returning he informed me he was sorry to say that he had not succeeded. Thus it was that an address containing a passage approving of Home Rule by Colonel King-Harman was published—a declaration on his part which I feel assured he, a very few months later, would gladly have blotted out. He soon realised the mistake

he had committed. When subsequently he got into Parliament on the Unionist "Ticket" he proved himself one of the most troublesome thorns in the side of the Home Rule Party.

Other matters connected with Mr. Parnell's career are dealt with in other parts of these reminiscences, but here, perhaps, I may refer briefly to a few isolated, but, I hope, not altogether uninteresting incidents. Mr. Parnell, so far as my experience went—and I attended more of his meetings from 1879 to the close of his career than any other journalist in Ireland—was always civil and courteous to journalists. He frequently travelled in the same compartment with the reporters when going to or returning from a meeting in the country. At that time the reporters usually carried candles with them to light up the compartment in which they were travelling, and in which they were transcribing their notes. Those were the days of the dingy oil lamps in railway carriages, one in the roof of each compartment; the extra light from the candles—usually stuck in their own grease on the window ledge, sometimes as many as three on one ledge—caused an illumination which readily attracted attention, and in this way the crowds at the stations soon learned how to find out the compartment in which Parnell was travelling, and crowding round it they raised a vigorous cheer.

The platforms, in the case of open-air meetings—and the vast majority were held in the open air—were

generally very substantial structures, planks laid on empty beer barrels. There were, however, exceptions to the rule. One of these exceptions was on the occasion of the Enniscorthy meeting in the spring of 1880, when the partisans of the Chevalier O'Clery raised the disturbance described in a succeeding chapter, headed "Some Disorderly Meetings." It was strong enough to bear the weight of those present on it, but if anything like a determined attack upon it had been made it could have been easily demolished. The incident I am about to describe, however, occurred at Athlone. There was a large gathering assembled to hear Parnell and other speakers, some time in 1881. The platform was an unusually high one, and it had not the customary solid foundation of porter barrels. The reporters were delighted at first sight with the arrangements made for their accommodation, namely, a row of school desks on the very front of the platform. The speaking had hardly started when crash went the whole front portion of the structure carrying the desks and the reporters with it, a fall of sixteen or eighteen feet. Nobody was seriously injured. I went with the rest, but quickly realising the situation I cast myself forward with the object of getting as clear as possible of the falling debris. I escaped unhurt, but my umbrella was smashed. The proceedings which were, of course, interrupted, were in a few minutes resumed, expression being given meanwhile to the belief that the breakdown was due to a malicious

cutting of some of the supports of the structure —a suggestion for which apparently there was no foundation whatever. The speakers and a few others either remained on the uninjured part of the platform, or took their places on it a second time, and the talking went on. I thought it safer not to remount the platform and took up my place in front of it. My position there was an unusual one, and some of those around me, taking it into their heads that I was a Government reporter, began to threaten and hustle me about. Parnell, who was speaking, at once shouted "let that gentleman alone," and I was not further molested.

The Post Office Telegraph Department usually made very satisfactory arrangements for transmitting Press work. On one occasion a very large assemblage gathered in the Market Square of Longford. There being then no train from Longford to Dublin on Sunday, the reports had to be telegraphed to Dublin, as well as London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds, and likewise to Cork, Belfast and Derry. In such cases the Post Office Authorities provided a Wheatstone Instrument, and five or six operators to "punch" the matter for transmission. I may state, parenthetically, that up to this time and for some years afterwards, the Press Association had practically no part in reporting speeches in Ireland. There was such a well-organised corps, each member of which was interested as correspondent of one or more

of all the best journals in England and Scotland, as well as in the larger cities and towns of Ireland, that the Press Association had no chance. The papers represented by this "Syndicate" as I may call it—although it was merely a combination—included, frequently, *The Times*, *The Daily News*, *The Standard*, and at a later period *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Leeds Mercury*, *The Liverpool Post*, *The Scotsman*, *The Glasgow Herald* and *The North British Daily Mail*. The reports were not identical, save as to Mr. Parnell's speeches, the descriptive portions and the less important speakers being done separately and independently. In Longford, on the occasion to which I now refer, the Postmaster was kind enough to allow the reporters the use of his drawingroom in which to write their reports. This facilitated the work very much, not only because the accommodation was better, but because the arrangement placed us almost alongside the telegraph operators, of whose intelligent co-operation it would be impossible to speak too highly. The staff consisted of about half a dozen, under the competent superintendence of Mr. Keating; the result was that the report was despatched to all parts by eleven o'clock at night, and the telegraph staff were able to proceed to Dublin by the night mail train.

In connection with the same meeting I may mention a circumstance which excited some public interest. For several weeks Mr. Parnell's whereabouts had been a mystery. He had arranged to address a meeting in

Roscommon a fortnight before he came to Longford but had failed to put in an appearance. When the Longford meeting was drawing near, there was still a doubt whether he would be present. When he did arrive by the last train on the Saturday night I noticed that his appearance was changed, He had shaved off his beard, leaving only his moustache, a fact which I recorded in the Dublin paper which I represented. This publication was the cause of much gossip. After the meeting in Longford Mr. Parnell drove to Roscommon to apologize to the local leaders, and a week or two afterwards he spoke at a meeting in that town.

I was present at that meeting in Roscommon. The one thing that I distinctly remember about it was the apparently immense number of farmers' horses—they were popularly spoken of as the Land League Cavalry—which, ridden by their owners, came into the town. The procession which I watched from the hotel window seemed to be endless, but soon I discovered the secret. The town is so constructed that the horses, although always going seemingly in one direction, could pass the same spot again and again ; and unless you happened to remark the same horse passing more than once you would come to the conclusion that the procession was a very large one—perhaps ten times as large as it was in reality. This was the secret of the apparently endless body of Land League Cavalry on that occasion.

Parnell's oratory indoors was very different from what it was at open-air meetings. This is, perhaps, characteristic of most public speakers; but as there were few fluent speakers who spoke at that time in the open air, the difference attracted more notice in Parnell's case. When speaking in the open air to large audiences—and with the exception already mentioned he always had large audiences—he spoke very deliberately and in a tone which reached those on the outer fringe of the gathering. But when speaking indoors, where it was not necessary to strain his voice, he spoke very rapidly. On one occasion, speaking in Waterford Town Hall, so marked was the difference that the reporters, most of whom had not previously heard him elsewhere than in the open air, were astonished, and soon discovered that they must wield their pencils with greater speed and greater energy than they were accustomed to do with Parnell speaking out of doors.

All experienced journalists know how easily it may occur for a newspaper to be "stuck" in an item of important news. "Stuck" means that while one or more of your contemporaries have a particular item of news your paper has not got it. The great bugbear to the man on "town"—especially on "night town"—is that he must not allow the paper with which he is connected to be without any item of news which can be properly described as "town" news. In a large city like Dublin it is somewhat difficult to avoid being

"stuck" occasionally. This was so in a very marked degree during the period from 1867, when the Fenian "Rising" occurred, down through all the succeeding years up to 1887. Not only were there during those years numerous agrarian outrages, many of them murders, in the South and West of Ireland, but also murders arising out of the agrarian and Fenian movements were perpetrated in Dublin. Head Constable Talbot, who, it was alleged, had inveigled a number of the disaffected in the County Tipperary into illegal acts and who gave evidence for the Crown in the Fenian trials of 1867, was shot in a narrow laneway in Dublin at a late hour on the night of the 11th of July, 1871. I was leaving the office about four in the morning as usual, when at the corner of the street, which was also the corner of the building in which the paper was printed and published, the policeman who was standing there, as was his habit, bid me "good morning" and then moved towards me and asked if I had heard of the shooting of Head Constable Talbot. I replied that I had not. The Detective Office being just across the street I went there and, in a few minutes, gleaned full particulars of the murder. These I wrote out as rapidly as possible standing at the "stone" in the composing room while I did so, and handing over the pages—which I made very short—one by one to the overseer who in turn distributed them to the printers. In a very brief space of time the whole story was in type—in ample time for the first edition of the paper. Thus

was *The Daily Express* saved from being "stuck" in an event of some importance. Talbot lingered for three or four days, and died on the 15th of July. The trial of the alleged murderer began on the 30th of October and ended on the 10th of November in an acquittal, which that prosaic book of reference—"Haydn's Dictionary of Dates"—describes as "an extraordinary verdict." The defence was, not that the accused did not fire the shot, but that death was due to unskilfulness on the part of the surgeons who extracted the bullet. This was the contention of a clever Surgeon, Doctor O'Leary, afterwards elected Member of Parliament for Drogheda. The very able cross-examination (through his coaching) of the surgeons who were examined for the prosecution, together with Doctor O'Leary's own evidence, resulted in inducing the jury to acquit the accused, and practically to throw the entire responsibility on the surgeons who took part in the attempt to save Talbot's life, by extracting the bullet.

The Franco-Prussian war attracted great attention in Ireland. As usual, the sympathies of the Irish people were divided; the Protestants taking the side of the Germans, and the Roman Catholics the side of the French. There was then existing a paper called *The Dublin Evening Post*, which had been established a good many years before, but by this time was struggling for its life. How many times *The Post* published reports of a defeat of Prince Frederick

Charles with "immense losses" it would now be difficult to ascertain; but the veracious print had a Prussian defeat in almost every issue. Another peculiar feature in the publication of news in Dublin at that time was the issue of printed slips of telegrams from the seat of war received during the day. These, were not published by the newspapers, but by a bookseller in a central thoroughfare, and were sold at a halfpenny each. During the recent South African War, in which the public were much more deeply interested, there was no attempt to repeat that experiment; probably because in the interval the evening papers had been reduced in price to a halfpenny.

Mr. John Ferguson, of Glasgow, frequently spoke at Land League and National League meetings in Ireland. He was a fairly effective speaker, but he had a stereotyped peroration in which "the land would be free—free as the air we breathe," "free as the lark," and many other phrases of a similar character played a part. I heard this repeated time after time, and it had been printed more than once in the paper which I represented. However, I was doomed to hear it once more on the occasion of a visit of Mr. Parnell—the only one, I think, which he made—to the town of Wexford. The meeting was a very large one, and much importance was attached to it, partly because Wexford had never been very enthusiastic about the Home Rule movement. John Ferguson, I may add, was in the habit of carefully choosing the meetings he attended; he spoke at the

open-air meeting held in the afternoon and I need hardly say that he trotted out his famous peroration. When he began it I dropped my pencil. Close by me was a Doctor Cardiff, a dispensary doctor from the western side of the county, who was fond of posing as an ultra nationalist on every occasion that presented itself. Addressing me in a somewhat threatening manner he said, "Does your paper not think this worth reporting?" I replied that I knew how to do my work, and that in any case it was none of his business. A dinner was held in the evening. I had as usual received an invitation which, of course, I availed myself of, and I took my seat along with my confreres, chiefly the representatives of the Wexford papers, several of whom had witnessed the incident at the meeting. They at once volunteered the statement that should Doctor Cardiff make any objection to my being allowed to remain during the dinner, they would leave the room also. This was but one of many instances of the loyalty to each other which was almost always shown by Irish journalists. Doctor Cardiff, however, seemingly considered that he had better refrain from interfering, and all passed off quietly.

It is unnecessary to say that one of the most important duties of a sub-editor is to guard against the insertion of libellous matter. I had a somewhat curious experience in a matter of the sort. One Sunday evening early in 1875 I found among the subjects I had to deal with a communication purporting to be from a

correspondent, who signed his name to the document. It purported to give an account of the suicide of a resident of the neighbourhood, who, the correspondent alleged, had, while under the influence of drink, thrown himself over a cliff into the sea at a small village on the Mayo coast. The handwriting was poor; but no sub-editor of an Irish paper would have his suspicion excited by that circumstance. On the contrary, it would go a good way to stamp it as bona fide. Nor was the fact that the correspondent was unknown to me sufficient to suggest *mala fides*. I was accustomed to receive paragraphs from volunteer correspondents anxious to earn a few shillings for lineage. I accordingly inserted the paragraph. A few days later there came a solicitor's letter threatening an action at the suit of the man who was alleged to have committed suicide. An apology was inserted, but at the trial which was held at the following Assizes in Castlebar the apology was held to be insufficient. There was also a plea of "no malice," which of course was obviously a true plea. The jury, however, found a verdict for the plaintiff with £90 damages. Some years subsequently the proprietor of the paper (*The Daily Express*) on examination before a Parliamentary Committee on the question of the Law of Libel stated that the report of the alleged occurrence had been actually written by the plaintiff—the alleged suicide. This was the only action I was in any way responsible for during my nine years sub-editing; and Dr. Patton, who had at that

time twenty-five years experience, for the greater portion of which time he was Sub-Editor, assured Mr. Robinson that under similar circumstances he would, without hesitation, have published the paragraph.

There is a widespread but mistaken belief that the "potato famine" was entirely or almost entirely confined to Ireland. From what I remember Scotland suffered quite as much, having regard to the much smaller proportion of potato culture there than in Ireland. I remember that even in the small village in which I lived the great bulk of the crop in the first year of the blight was a complete failure, and special machinery was erected for the purpose of converting the potatoes into starch. I have a clear recollection of a farmer who was in the habit of coming from a distance of four miles almost every Sunday to attend church in the village, bringing with him a potato to show to my father which, he said, showed symptoms of quite a new disease. This incident occurred when as yet there was no news of the "blight" in Ireland. The "new disease" speedily spread over the country to the extent I have already indicated.

CHAPTER III.

The Land League.

In 1867 I was offered and accepted the position of Dublin correspondent of *The Daily News*, and for the succeeding eight years I led what, looking back at it, was, I think, a marvellously strenuous life. In addition to my duties as Sub-Editor of *The Daily Express*, which I continued to discharge as I have stated up to the middle of 1875, I wrote a "Letter" every morning between four and six o'clock to *The Daily News*. There was for about three years practically no telegraphing; only the most important news was telegraphed and that in a very condensed form, the cost being something like a dozen times what it became when the transfer to the Government took place. The daily letter therefore naturally took a more complete form than was supposed to be necessary when later on everything was telegraphed. Moreover, when the Editor (Dr. Patton) went away on his annual month's holiday I had also to write his daily letter to *The Times*. This I always tackled after seeing *The*

Daily Express to press, and having posted it in a pillar box near the office I would then sit down and write my letter to *The Daily News*. Sometimes I was in doubt whether the pillar box was cleared before the last letter was finished, if so it had then to be taken to the General Post Office and posted there. If I was in doubt I would drop a newspaper unaddressed into the pillar box and ascertain whether it was cleared or not from the sound caused by the dropping of the paper.

This sort of life continued for several years. When the transfer of the telegraphs took place the whole system changed. Instead of writing my letter to *The Daily News* in the morning it had to be sent by telegraph, beginning about six o'clock in the evening. On the whole this was a relief for a time, but the establishment of the Home Rule League so increased the quantity of news to be sent that in a very short time the nightly despatch by telegraph came to be quite as long as that previously sent by post. This strenuous life became still more so when I undertook the writing of a weekly leading article for a provincial paper—*The Ulster Gazette*. This was before the telegraphic change, and of course the article had to be written during Dr. Patton's annual holiday as well as at other times. Both despatches for London, as already stated, had to reach the General Post Office before 6 a.m. For Armagh, however, I could post up to 7-40. Time after time I tramped with the letters, or one of them, for London, and then returning to the office proceeded to

write my leader, and when finished I tramped with that also. On these occasions I would get home about 8 a.m., having been with a brief interval hard at work from five o'clock the previous evening.

It will, I think, not surprise my readers to learn that when I resigned the sub-editorship and resumed my position on the reporting staff, I, whose weight at the commencement of my Dublin career was over nine stone could only in March, 1875, when I gave up the sub-editing, turn seven stone seven pounds, hat, clothing and boots included. A few years later I came close up to eleven stone. The active out-door life, the numerous journeys to the country during the time of the Home Rule League, the Land League, the National League and all the other aliases which the Nationalist Party were compelled to adopt for their organisation, restored me to a normally robust condition. Of a number of the more interesting of these journeys a description will be found in subsequent pages.

In 1880, after fifteen years' service on *The Daily Express*, I resigned, and here I may state that the proprietor, Mr. John Robinson, was, at one time—in the seventies—inclined to coquette with Home Rule, but Dr. Patton, the Editor, stoutly opposed this and thus undoubtedly saved the situation. Among my colleagues on *The Daily Express* while I was sub-editor there were, besides Dr. Patton, the Right Hon. Lord Rathmore, then the Hon. David Plunket, one who is now a Judge of the High Court of Justice in Ireland,

one who became a County Court Judge, three who became Queen's Counsel, one who is a Bishop of the Church of Ireland—all leader writers. The late Sir Wm. Thomson, C.B., while preparing for the medical profession, and who afterwards had a distinguished career, being created a knight, and twice elected President of the Royal College of Surgeons, was an esteemed member of the reporting staff for several years and was always proud of having been so connected with the Press. During the South African war he went out at the head of the special Surgical corps organised by Lord Iveagh. He died in October, 1909.

My ability and experience as a journalist were well known in Dublin, and I passed direct from *The Daily Express* to *The Freeman's Journal*, where I remained for five and a-half years, that is, to the close of 1885, when I resigned in consequence of the repeated attacks made by *United Ireland* upon myself and on *The Freeman's Journal* for retaining me on the staff, thereby giving me facilities for "distorting" facts relating to Ireland in the columns of *The Daily News*.

It turned out very fortunate that I transferred my services to *The Freeman* at the time I did. It was of great importance to me as correspondent of *The Daily News* to have an opportunity of attending all the important Land League meetings throughout the country, as well as the very few held in Dublin, and this would not have been possible had I remained on *The Daily Express*, as that journal

did not take as deep an interest as *The Freeman* did in the Parnellite movement, or in the doings of the Land League and its successor, the National League. During that eventful period I attended more Land League meetings in the country than any other Dublin journalist. It was well known that my political views were not those of the conductors of *The Freeman's Journal*, but it was equally well known that whatever might be the views I entertained, my employers could depend on my giving fair and impartial reports. There were others on the staff whose tendency was to go out of their way to lean unduly to the side of which *The Freeman* was the organ, but my experience on that journal, at that period at all events, was, that its conductors desired that the members of the reporting staff should give unbiassed reports. It was mainly for this reason, I believe, that I was selected to go to Skye when the " brush " between the Crofters and the police took place in April, 1882. Some details of that somewhat remarkable journey appear in subsequent pages, but it may be stated here that in publishing a short preliminary despatch, handed in at Porth railway station, while on my way to Portree, *The Freeman* in a leading article made a point of emphasising my impartiality and of assuring its readers that I would steer clear of exaggeration. At the close of that despatch, which appeared in Saturday's issue, I announced somewhat rashly that my next despatch would appear on Monday. I managed however to keep my promise.

Harking back a little I may briefly recall the period of the Home Rule League and some of the incidents of that period. These include the selection of Mr. William Shaw, M.P. for Cork, as Chairman of the Nationalist, or as it was then designated the Home Rule party; the development of the policy of parliamentary obstruction of which Mr. Joseph Bigger was the inventor; the election of Mr. Isaac Butt as Chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party; his subsequent deposition; the election of Mr. Parnell in his stead, and the rout of the "nominal" Home Rulers. I was present at the meeting at which Mr. Butt's deposition was resolved on. The scene was a pathetic one. The old man eloquently defended himself with great ability and vigour; and at intervals shed tears.

During the General Election in the spring of 1880 I was confined to my room, but was not thereby debarred from attending to my *Daily News* correspondence. At that time the declaration of the poll in Ireland was, as it still is, alike for boroughs and counties with few exceptions, deferred to the following day and generally to the afternoon. This rendered it possible for me to send from day to day a general review of the progress of the elections by telegraph the same evening. I may state here as an example of the liberality of *The Daily News*, that although this service was in reality a portion of my ordinary duty as correspondent, I most unexpectedly received a special cheque in acknowledgment of those despatches.

For a considerable time during the period when the "Land War" was being most energetically prosecuted I might almost say that I was a special reporter of the movements of the late Archbishop Croke, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cashel. Dr. Croke took a deep interest in the Land League movement, and for two years he took advantage of his confirmation tours to propound his political views. His views while distinctly in favour of the popular movement were at the same time of a moderating character. On one occasion, however, he got pulled up for something he said, I forget what it was, but it must have been less moderate than usual. The Pope, he told me, had seen in *The Daily News* a report of the previous speech and had written to him about it. The Archbishop was of course aware that I was the correspondent of *The Daily News*, as it was my invariable habit in every instance in which knowledge of the fact could be of the smallest importance to make it known. He only mentioned the matter as introductory to making a request that I should take care to send to that journal the "modification" of his former speech which he said he intended to make that day. This of course I did.

I had on one occasion at least to make a vigorous pursuit of the Archbishop in order to come up with him in time to report the proceedings. Intimation of the Archbishop's intention to speak the same evening at Mullinahone, in the County Tipperary, did not reach Dublin until the afternoon of the day on which the

meeting was to take place. There was eighty miles of a train journey and about twenty miles car drive between me and the village. Thurles, the end of the train journey, was reached shortly after five o'clock. Then came the journey by road. Before starting by car I learned that Archbishop Croke, who had left some hours before me, would probably halt at Killenaule, about half way between Thurles and Mullinahone. A rapid drive brought me quickly to Killenaule, too late, however, to find Dr. Croke there, but not too late to find the gathering of clergymen by whom he had been received. I learned that I had every chance of coming up with his Grace before he reached the place of meeting, so I started without delay on the second stage of my car journey. I came up with the "procession," a somewhat formidable affair, while I was yet at least a mile from Mullinahone. The procession was moving at a very slow rate, and I found no difficulty in getting on towards the front, which I reached before Mullinahone came in view; I was therefore in good time. A platform had been constructed for the occasion, but as it was by this time quite dark lighted candles were stuck on the front of it—a unique experience, for me at all events, at an open air meeting. Dr. Croke's speech over, I lost no time in returning to Thurles, which was reached a little after midnight. I transcribed my notes in the post office and the telegraphic despatch was received in good time for publication.

Dr. Croke, although occasionally he caused a little inconvenience by asking to read the transcript or a portion of the transcript of his speech—even in that respect he readily accepted any reasonable excuse—was always ready to do what he could to facilitate reporters, and if they were pressed for time would dictate in advance, and if he did not intend to say very much would actually write out with his own hand what he intended to say. One occasion I particularly remember; he was to attend some function at Galbally, a village prettily situated in the fruitful "Golden Vale" of Tipperary, although actually within the County of Limerick. There was only one other reporter present. We travelled by the morning train to Limerick Junction station and thence drove to Galbally. We were then informed that the actual proceedings would not begin until two o'clock; and consequently if we waited we would miss the only train to Dublin, it being Sunday, and would require to telegraph our despatches instead of taking them with us. Dr. Croke at once sat down and wrote very rapidly and in very clear handwriting about half a column, covering what he was going to say. This served our purpose and we caught our train.

As Ballingarry—the scene of the ignominious collapse of Smith O'Brien's "insurrection," in a cabbage garden attached to one of the houses in the village—is near Mullinahone, I may here give a brief description of a Sunday "Land League Demonstration"

which I attended there. The gathering was not a very large one, and there was a remarkable absence of enthusiasm. The speaking had gone on for a considerable time and not a cheer, not even a laugh had come from the audience. So marked was the stolidity displayed that at last one of the local leaders shouted from the platform "ye divils, why don't you cheer?" Even this did not rouse them, and the only "cheer" evoked during the entire proceedings was when one of the audience shouted out the word "cheers."

The evictions on the Smith-Barry estate in County Tipperary, including the important market town of Tipperary, resulted in the greatest fiasco ever brought about by the Nationalist Party. Mr. William O'Brien was the prime mover in the erection of the wooden houses which were dignified with the title of "New Tipperary." I paid several visits and wrote in *The Irish Times* a number of articles on the struggle between Mr. Smith-Barry (now Lord Barrymore) and his Tipperary tenantry before and during the erection of the new town. The object in building New Tipperary was to transfer the business carried on in the old to the new town—a number of shopkeepers having adopted the Plan of Campaign—and thereby leave the old town derelict. Adhering to the plan which, with one or two exceptions, I have followed throughout these reminiscences I refrain from giving extracts from what I then wrote, and only refer to the fact that, at a very early stage in the proceedings, I pointed out

that one great obstacle in the way of the successful prosecution of the object in view would be the difficulty of inducing the magistrates to grant licences to sell drink in the new premises, and without licensed houses no market town in Ireland could exist. This difficulty it soon became evident could not be overcome, and in this way the doom of "New Tipperary" was practically sealed, even before it became known, as it did afterwards, that the new town had been built on a site which in a year or two would revert to Mr. Smith-Barry. The result was that an order was eventually obtained from the High Court of Justice in Ireland to have "New Tipperary" levelled to the ground.

CHAPTER IV.

The Earliest No-Rent Disturbances.

The first ebullition of lawlessness in resistance to the payment of rent took place early in January, 1880, in a remote part of Connemara. The only news received in Dublin up to Monday, the 4th of January, relative to the outbreak, was contained in a brief general statement that on the previous Saturday the people in the district of Carraroe had resisted a process-server, who, accompanied by a large police escort, had attempted to serve processes for non-payment of rent in a district which, up to that time, had been little heard of by the outside world. Carraroe is about twenty-seven miles from the town of Galway, and skirts the north-western shore of Galway Bay. I was despatched by the mid-day train and reached Galway about seven o'clock in the evening, an hour at which it was of course absurd to think of going farther in search of information. In any event it would be necessary to telegraph from Galway, and as a journey of fifty-four miles could not be accomplished in time to enable me to

forward any despatch for next morning's paper, I had to content myself for that night with picking up such crumbs of information—and they where not inconsiderable—as were obtainable in Galway. Next morning, however, I was on my way to Carraroe before eight o'clock, having as my companions the representatives of the two other Dublin morning papers. We halted at Spiddal, about ten miles from Galway, and having procured a fresh horse resumed our journey. After driving six or eight miles we left even Connemara civilisation behind us. The road was little else than a by-road, leading for the greater part of the way through a bog. The country was wild and barren and the houses were mere hovels or mud huts of the class which then existed and are still to be found, although not in such large numbers, in the poorer districts of the West of Ireland. The bleak and dreary aspect was occasionally relieved by an arm of the sea stretching inland, but even there the surroundings were such as to detract immensely from what, with different surroundings, would have produced a picturesque effect. Costello's Bay and Greatman's Bay would form an excellent foreground if the shores were planted with trees; but in this part of Connemara, as in nearly the entire district (somewhat undefined as it is) to which that title is given, there are scarcely any trees, and all around is bleak, desolate and barren. There is little tillage, practically no land being fit to plough. Indeed, as the visitor approaches Carraroe, the only

sign of cultivation of any kind is in patches of ground generally only a few yards square—mere patches picked out between the rocks—in which corn or potatoes, generally the latter, were grown, as I was told, and as on a subsequent visit in mid-summer I was enabled to verify for myself. At last we reached Carraroe and here the sight was picturesque enough. The country was no longer so bleak as it had been, although it was quite as rocky and apparently quite as barren, but some of the rocks were higher and gave a more varied aspect to the landscape. As we turned a corner of the road we suddenly came upon a scene an artist would have appreciated, but which it is impossible for me to more than imperfectly describe. On eminences in front of us on both sides of the road were crowds of people, chiefly women, dressed in the roughest peasant garb—woollen shawls round the head and shoulders and red petticoats of homespun wool. Most of them were standing, but others were seated on ledges of rock. They numbered some five or six hundred, the greatest puzzle being that such a crowd should be forthcoming in a district which, to a casual visitor, seemed to be very sparsely populated, so much so that it might almost be described as uninhabited. These people, mostly women as I have said, had assembled to prevent the process-server from serving notices to quit. The force of police, considerable as it was, by which the process-server was protected was thought not to be numerous enough to justify an attempt being made to continue

the process-serving, the police being slow to resort to extreme measures in dealing with the crowd, and their own numbers not being sufficient to overawe the people without resorting to such measures. The police we found moving about the roads, or loitering in the barracks—by far the most considerable building, not excepting the Roman Catholic chapel, within miles of the spot. There were some three or four district inspectors, then called sub-inspectors, whom we found in their shirt sleeves seated on the beds in the barracks. Some constables were partaking of a frugal dinner of which potatoes formed the principal portion, they having being cooked in a large pot in the house of a neighbouring peasant. At this time there was no trace of that ill-feeling between the police and the peasantry which subsequently became so marked. The people distinguished with a wonderful amount of nicety between the process-server, whom they hated and whose life would not have been safe in their hands, and the members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, so many of whom, indeed all, it may be said, had been drawn from their own ranks. The good relations which were thus observable between the police and the people form an unimpeachable answer to the allegations made at the time, namely, that the police had, on the day before my arrival, treated the people with severity. It was even stated that they had inflicted a bayonet wound on a woman, that in fact they had "ripped her open" and she had died. All enquiries

into this allegation which was published in one of the Dublin journals, and of course cabled to America, failed to discover the slighest foundation for it.

Darkness sets in soon in the early days of January, and as we had a long journey before us and a heavy night's work at its close, we started as the sun was sinking slowly in the south-west. The drive back to Galway was dreary enough, there was not even a public-house on the way until we reached Spiddal, and, even if there had been, it is not always possible in such a district to get a drink of genuine beer, and as for the " wine of the country " it is, in Connemara as a rule, too strongly mixed with newly made " poteen " to be either pleasant or wholesome. At Spiddal we changed horses as we had done on the outward journey, the animal which had brought us from Galway in the morning taking us back in the evening. The " City of the Tribes " was not reached until ten o'clock. After supper, or rather dinner, we sat down about eleven o'clock to write our despatches, a task which, in my case, as I represented *The Daily News* as well as *The Daily Express* and had therefore to write two distinct reports, was not completed until nearly three o'clock in the morning.

We had to make a very early start next day, for the process-serving was to be resumed in a somewhat different direction, namely, on the Martin property in the neighbourhood of Oughterard. On this occasion there was a much larger force of police, and although

the bailiff was bespattered with mud he stuck to his work, and succeeded in either personally serving the notices, or in default of any one being found in the house in posting them on the door. The next day or two was spent in the neighbourhood of Headfort on the opposite side of Lough Corrib in a country of a totally different character from Carraroe and the Martin estate. The lands were of much better quality and the farmers of a more comfortable class. The resistance was of the same kind—crowding round the bailiff, shouting and groaning, throwing mud and pieces of turf at him, and occasionally more effective and dangerous missiles. The women were in every case the more aggressive. Young and old alike were active in showing their dislike of the process-server. When every now and again the police would make a rush and attempt to clear the road or " boreen " leading to the house of the tenant whom it was intended to serve, the women would climb the walls and cross the ditches as fleet of foot as if they were champion runners. Their language was not of the choicest, and would indeed have competed with that of the most experienced in what is known as " Billingsgate."

It was now Saturday and we ascertained that Monday's operations would be in the neighbourhood of Maam, in the very heart of Connemara and nearly thirty miles from Galway. In order to reach Maam in time we were obliged to start on Sunday evening. We drove that evening to Oughterard, somewhat less than

half way, and rising at six in the morning were on our way to Maam at seven whilst it was still dark. Despite our activity, however, we arrived late. When we reached Maam between nine and ten o'clock we learned that we were still some miles from the actual scene of operations, and that, moreover, the bailiff with his escort—by this time increased to two hundred men with no less than eight sub-inspectors, Mr. Hill, R.M., being in chief command—had started some considerable time before our arrival. We pushed on in the direction of Cong, but before we had gone far we met crowds of people returning towards Maam. The struggle had been short, sharp and decisive. At the first house which the bailiff was to visit, the people crowded round it and blocked the way completely. The magistrate in charge immediately read the Riot Act and ordered the crowd to disperse. As they did not move the police charged, and in a minute or two all was over. The crowd fled, but not before some of them were made acquainted with the weight of a policeman's baton. No serious injury, however, was inflicted, the police on this, as on numerous other occasions in later years, showing the utmost forbearance towards even the most disorderly members of the mob. We pressmen had on our way from Oughterard secured a quart of exceptionally good poteen, and on coming up with the police party very shortly after the "brush" with the mob, one of us (in the words of the Dublin *Daily Express* of next morning) handed the poteen to the police officers

first assuring them in "mock-earnest" that it was "Parliament whiskey," and they drank it without either a wry face or (presumably) any qualm of conscience.

Next day's operations were to be at Derrypark, in the mountain fastnesses of Maamtrasna, which afterwards became notorious through the murder of the Joyce family. This we came to the conclusion was too remote a district for us to reach and keep up our communication with Galway, which it was necessary to do for the convenience of telegraphing. Accordingly we bade the process-server and his escort farewell for the time.

It was not always a very safe position to occupy, that of special correspondent at a process-serving expedition. The incident which I am about to narrate did not take place within the actual boundary of the County Galway, but as it occurred in the adjoining County of Mayo, within a mile or two of the boundary line which divides the two counties, and, moreover, in a portion of Mayo which dips into the County of Galway, the narrative may not inappropriately find a place here. I was staying in Cong whither I had come to attend a magisterial inquiry into the murder of Lord Mountmorres in the autumn of 1880. The investigation was not productive of much matter for publication. As in the case of many agrarian murders in Ireland, so in this case also no evidence could be obtained. The inquiry took place on Thursday, and as there was to

be a Land League meeting at Maam on the following Sunday, the interval would barely suffice for a journey to Dublin and back again; it was arranged that I should remain in the neighbourhood until Sunday and attend the meeting at Maam. I remained accordingly, and it may be incidentally mentioned that at that meeting I met for the first time Mr. Parnell's organiser for the West of Ireland, P. J. Sheridan, who afterwards became so notorious. At that time there was no suspicion, at all events amongst the general public, that Sheridan had any special connection with outrage in the West. Whatever the police may have known or may have suspected they kept the knowledge to themselves, and it may even now be said that but for Mr. Parnell's references to Sheridan during the negotiations in connection with the "Kilmainham Treaty," Sheridan's connection with outrage in the West would probably have remained only a matter of suspicion. Not even the finding by the grand jury of a true bill against him for connection with the Phœnix Park murders would have done more than strengthen these suspicions. Sheridan when I met him, although a somewhat violent speaker on the platform, was as mild a mannered man as you would meet in the West of Ireland.

But this is a digression. The day before the meeting at Maam, having nothing else to do, I found myself tramping over the country in the neighbourhood of Cong, in the wake of a process-server escorted by a

considerable body of police in charge of Mr M'Sheehy, R.M., then stationed at Hollymount. A large crowd followed the party and hooted and groaned, and at one point stones were thrown, but no one was injured. It was the practice at the time to bring down special bailiffs from Dublin, men who were not known in the locality, so that the identity of the process-server might be more difficult to ascertain. One result of this, however, was that any civilian who was a stranger ran a risk of being mistaken for a process-server, especially if he presented the appearance of being well provided against inclement weather. The day in question was very wet and before leaving the hotel I had put on a heavy waterproof. When I came up with the party I alighted from my car and as usual went forward and introduced myself to Mr. M'Sheehy. The crowd doubtless noticed this, for some time afterwards when there was a scrimmage with the police at a cross-roads and when in order to see better what was going on I climbed a fence, some of the mob shouted at me and groaned, and one man cried " ah, look at him there, look at the dog on the wall." I adopted my usual policy under such circumstances of affecting not to notice them, and on the procession starting again I purposely mingled with the crowd, so as to suggest that I was not afraid to walk in their midst and that consequently they were probably wrong in supposing that I had any connection with the day's proceedings beyond that of a mere spectator. My calculations as

to the result of adopting that line of conduct were fully realised, and although I passed from the midst of the crowd to talk with Mr. M'Sheehy and the police and again back amongst the crowd no attempt was made to assault or even annoy me.

Sometime after the Carraroe evictions I had occasion to visit the district again to make some inquiries. I arrived there in the evening, too late to fulfil my mission until the following day. The question of getting myself "put up" for the night arose, but the difficulty was solved by the kindness of the Roman Catholic clergyman who procured for me the requisite accommodation in the house of a respectable peasant who gave up what I believed to be the only bed in the house, the rest of the inmates sleeping on "shake downs."

On this occasion there was in the priest's house a medical gentleman whom I had occasionally met in Dublin, where he was practising his profession. I was surprised to see him in this remote district and my surprise was increased when I learned that he was medical officer of a dispensary district of the Poor Law Union; still greater was my surprise when he further informed me that he had not given up his practice in Dublin. I knew that he was medical officer to a society in Dublin, and I expressed my surprise that he should think it possible to keep up his practice in Dublin and, at the same time, attend to his duties at Carraroe, one hundred and twenty-six miles by rail and twenty-three

miles by car from the metropolis. He took a sanguine view of the possiblities. The same gentleman I remember succeeded in getting himself sworn on the jury empanelled to try the cause of death of the first of the Invincibles who was hanged, and used his position to put questions to the witnesses, a most unusual thing for a medical man to do.

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Gladstone in Ireland and at Hawarden.

Mr. Gladstone's visit to Ireland in 1879 was an important event, although it can hardly be said to have had any political significance. For some time after his arrival he was the guest of Earl Fitzwilliam at Coollattin Park, County Wicklow, a few miles from the Vale of Avoca, so charmingly described in Moore's Melody, beginning

> There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet,
> As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet.

Avondale, then the residence of Mr. Parnell—in the very centre of the "sweet vale" and overlooking the Avonmore, a river much affected by lovers of Isaac Walton's favourite pastime—is now the property of "The Department"—the title by which The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland is briefly known—and used for chicken-rearing and "cramming," as also for tree-planting, a number of students being in attendance learning one or other of these branches of "agriculture."

But this is a digression. Mr. Gladstone during his stay at Coollattin Park *rested.* This is the briefest and most accurate way to express it. One result of this was that the visit was by no means fruitful of "copy." That, however, does not mean, as the uninitiated might imagine, that the journalists in attendance (of whom the writer was one) had a halcyon time of it. There is very ancient authority on the subject of the hardship of having to make bricks without straw. That is the most disagreeable task that a journalist can have assigned to him. However, we managed to send to our respective journals about one-third of a column each day. That these contributions to the day's news excited any great interest on the part of the public I very much doubt. Mr. Gladstone on leaving Coollattin Park visited Bray. At this time there was living in Bray a somewhat eccentric but very amusing personage, a Mr. Barnes, who was in the habit of making speeches to the students of Trinity College. Mr. Barnes was well-off and could afford to keep a handsome wagonette drawn by two spirited horses from which he would hold forth occasionally in the public streets, in the Phœnix Park, and in any other convenient or, perhaps I might also say, inconvenient place. Well, this gentleman managed very largely to monopolise Mr. Gladstone during the great Statesman's brief visit to Bray, a proceeding which provided much amusement to the large crowd which everywhere followed the distinguished visitor.

On the following day Mr. Gladstone came to Dublin and paid a visit to Trinity College, where he spent a considerable time in the Library and in other departments of the institution. In thus going round the principal places of interest in the College he was accompanied throughout by the Rev. W. G. Carroll, whose intimate association with *The Freeman's Journal* was well-known to the representatives of the other Dublin papers, including *The Daily Express* which I then represented. *The Daily Express* on the following morning in describing Mr. Gladstone's movements said that the Rev. Mr. Carroll " monopolised him just as Mr. Barnes had done the previous day." Mr. Carroll met me next day and laughed heartily at the " excellent hit " as he described it.

I have spoken of making bricks without straw ; but Mr. Gladstone's visit to Trinity College created a difficulty of a different kind. There were ample materials to work on, but a lack of appliances. Mr. Gladstone had not up to that time broken silence in public in Ireland, and, expecting that he would be as dumb in Trinity College as he had been at Coollattin and Bray, the reporters were not all provided with the means of taking notes. Suddenly, on the steps of the dining hall, the Right Honorable gentleman began to address the crowd. I myself had no notebook, nothing but a small octavo diary, seven days to a page, partly occupied with printed information of the usual kind. In the circumstances there was nothing

for it but to utilise this not very suitable book for taking notes of the speech, which of course had to be taken standing. Mr. Gladstone's subsequent visit to Abbeyleix and Kilkenny excited no public interest.

On several occasions I had to travel by goods train. One journey of this kind was from Naas between one and two o'clock in the morning, when I induced the guard to take me "on board" in order that I might arrive in Dublin with my copy in time for publication. In another instance the journey was from Maynooth to Dublin; this was during Mr. Gladstone's visit. It having become known that he would visit Maynooth on Sunday the Dublin papers each sent a representative by the morning train. On our arrival, and after the searching inquiries usually made under such circumstances, we were definitely assured that the visit was a strictly private one. It was then only ten o'clock in the morning and there was no passenger train to Dublin until nine o'clock at night. Maynooth is not a place where anyone would care to spend ten or eleven hours on a Sunday. We accordingly proceeded to the railway station, and learned that a goods train was about to leave for the city. We got into the waggon next the engine where there was just sufficient standing room, and by dint of holding tight managed to maintain our equilibrium during the fifteen miles run despite the severe jolting of the train. We all, however, rather enjoyed the rough ride; my wife, who formed one of the party, being much amused with her experience of this novel mode of locomotion.

The only other occasion on which I heard Mr. Gladstone speak in public was when he received a deputation of Irish Nationalists at Hawarden in October, 1886. The deputation, of whom Mr. T. D. Sullivan, M.P., was one, presented an address to Mr. Gladstone. The ceremony took place in the drawingroom of Hawarden Castle. This was the first time I heard Mr. Gladstone speak at any considerable length, and I was very much impressed by the ease with which he delivered himself and the marvellous continuity of his address. As to my own duties on the occasion I wrote as much of my report as I could before the starting of the last train from Chester to Holyhead, handed it in to be telegraphed from Chester, and then "opened" by wire the Holyhead office where on my arrival about midnight I sent the conclusion of my despatch which I had meanwhile written in the train. *The Freeman's Journal*, which was much more interested in the proceedings, had to go back upon them a day later.

CHAPTER VI.

Reporters' Difficulties.

I had the privilege of reading a paper on "Reporters and Reporting" at the Annual Conference of the Institute of Journalists held at Cardiff in 1897. Perhaps I may be pardoned if I here give a short extract from that paper.

> "The public generally have little idea of the strain which verbatim shorthand writing involves, especially when, as is often the case, proper arrangements are not made for the accommodation of the reporters so as to make it easy for them to hear. The strain of taking down the exact words of a rapid speaker, even under the most favourable circumstances, is severe, as anyone who has taken full notes, say of a law case, or of any inquiry or other similar proceeding for five or six hours, well knows; but if, in addition to this unavoidable strain of rapid notetaking, the reporter has also, on account of bad accommodation to strain his sense of hearing to the utmost, the labour and fatigue are enormously increased; and that

increased labour and fatigue those who have charge of public functions ought not, by imperfect arrangements, to impose upon such a useful class of public servants. The judge on the bench, if he misses a word, or thinks he mis-interprets the answer of a witness, and all know how frequently that occurs, can have the answer repeated. The reporter would run the risk of being committed for contempt of court if he claimed the same privilege."

The question of proper accommodation for reporters when recording proceedings in which the public are interested was frequently raised in Ireland during the last forty years. It is to the credit of the reporting staffs that in this matter they treated everybody and every class alike. Earl Spencer, when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, was on two occasions boycotted, through no fault of his own, but through gross mismanagement on the part of those who "engineered" his reception. The first time was on the occasion of a visit to Londonderry in the late seventies, during the holding of one of the last shows held under the auspices of the Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland. Those shows were held annually, each year in a different city or town, Dublin being occasionally, but not frequently, selected; the growing importance of the annual Dublin shows held under the auspices of the Royal Dublin Society rendering the holding of the Royal Agricultural Society's Shows in the metropolis a matter of little importance. Eventually the "Royal

Agricultural" was merged in the "Royal Dublin" Society, with the result that all the national shows have since been held in Dublin. The incident I am about to refer to occurred, as I have said, in the City of Derry. Lord Spencer and others were to speak in the Town Hall. The reporters (of whom I was one) found on their arrival that the only accommodation provided for them—and as it turned out, even that was not intended for their use—was the front of the platform, a very inconvenient arrangement at the best. They took their seats, however, the front portion of the platform serving as a table, and resolved to make the best of the accommodation, bad as it was. They had scarcely done so when the "authorities" called on them to leave their seats. Where it was intended they should go never transpired; but, there being no other accommodation available, they vacated their seats and left the hall, which was then crowded, in a body, and proceeded to one of the hotels in the neighbourhood where a number of them were staying and passed a resolution condemning the action of the promoters of the meeting. The speeches were not reported. One good result followed; the promoters of functions in Derry requiring the presence of reporters never repeated the blunder made on that occasion. Years afterwards I attended a meeting at which Lord Salisbury was the chief and practically the only speaker, and nothing could have been more satisfactory than the arrangements made for reporting the proceedings.

Lord Spencer was concerned in a somewhat similar incident a few years later. I do not suggest for a moment that His Excellency was in any way responsible in either case for what occurred. In both cases the fault evidently lay with the Committee, or whoever was entrusted with the making of the necessary arrangements, for in all my experience of Lord Spencer, and it was very considerable, he was always most courteous to the representatives of the Press. The occurrence I am about to relate took place at a dinner given at the Giant's Causeway Hotel, on the occasion of the opening, on the 28th of September, 1883, of the first electrically equipped railway in Ireland, or rather in the United Kingdom, namely, the line from Portrush to the Causeway. On the representatives of the Press arriving at the banqueting hall they were informed that they should dine in an adjoining room, the reason given being that there was no available accomodation in the principal apartment. This would probably have been got over, but a further development followed. Some of the reporters had received invitations to the dinner while others, although they had been invited to the " opening " of the line, had not been invited to the dinner. The matter ended in those who had received the double invitation (of whom I, representing *The Daily News*, was one) making common cause with those who had only received the general invitation, and the proceedings went on without any reporters being present.

Mr. Parnell also was similarly treated on account of the scandalous treatment of the reporters by the local promoters of a banquet given to him in Limerick on the occasion of his principal visit to that city in the early eighties; again the representatives of the Press acted with unanimity and withdrew from the room. In this instance also the central figure (Mr. Parnell) was not only acquitted of all responsibility in the matter, but when he learned what had occurred expressed his full approval of the action of the reporters.

The latest incident of the kind—at which, however, I was not present—occurred on the 31st of December, 1907, at Waterford, when, after a big shout, as the clock struck the midnight hour, in celebration of the abolition of the toll on Waterford Bridge, the members of the Corporation of Waterford and a number of invited guests sat down to supper. The arrangements for the reporters were of even a more scandalous description than in the case of the Limerick banquet, and the Dublin reporters left the room. What the Waterford reporters did I never ascertained.

The reporting of the speeches at the Land League meetings was frequently done under very uncomfortable circumstances, sometimes under a heavy fall of snow, as at Nenagh on one occasion when the late Mr. E. D. Gray, M.P., addressed a meeting as a candidate for the division; sometimes, as at Sligo, when the late Michael Davitt was the principal speaker, under a downpour of rain which rendered it necessary for the

reporters to hold their notebooks so that the page on which the notes were being written might be sheltered by the preceding pages of the book being held down as close as possible, otherwise the rain would have entirely effaced them. On one occasion at an open-air meeting in Kildare there was no accommodation provided; a heavy shower came on and I took notes of a speech by Mr. Parnell, holding my raised umbrella and note book in one hand and my pencil in the other.

As to the weekly meetings of the Land League in Dublin I had an experience which I think I am justified in saying was unique. The "performers" on those occasions were not a very numerous body. The chairman for the day was usually the principal speaker; but the field for choosing a chairman was not a very wide one. In the earlier days Thomas Brennan, "Pat" Egan and a few others held forth in a small back parlour on the ground floor of a house in Middle Abbey Street. Later on the offices were removed to more respectable quarters in Sackville Street, and the *personnel* of the performers somewhat improved. They might still, however, be truly described as a "stock" company. But if that was true of the speakers it was even more emphatically so of the audience. I attended a very large proportion of the weekly meetings held at 39 Upper Sackville Street, and I unhesitatingly affirm that, on the average, not less than one-half of the men who attended the meetings regularly were men who had every appearance of being corner

boys or loafers—the class in fact which fills the galleries of our public courts. It is no libel, therefore, to describe the audience as a "stock" audience. An attempt during the summer of 1908 to revive those meetings proved a dismal failure.

I have said that at these meetings I occupied a somewhat unique position. Being the correspondent of *The Daily News*, which then and up to 1886, when Mr Gladstone was "converted" to Home Rule, the sole reason given being the return of a larger number than formerly of Irish Members of Parliament on the Home Rule ticket, was strongly opposed to Home Rule. It then changed its politics and supported Mr. Gladstone's new policy. My own views up to this time on nearly all subjects, but especially on the Home Rule question, were in complete accord with the policy of the paper, and I wrote on those lines, not only my ordinary daily correspondence, but numerous special letters. The tactics of the Land League, however, in promoting the object the party had in view, were from the beginning to the end aimed at the suppression of any free expression of opinion in the Press. One result was, that when attending the meetings of the Land League in Dublin, I had frequently the pleasure of hearing myself vigorously denounced by leading speakers, over and over again by Mr. T. M. Healy, M.P. Of course I sat in silence listening with perfect equanimity to those philippics. On none of those occasions was there the slightest suggestion that I had misrepresented anything

in my contributions to *The Daily News*. It was because I did not conceal the truth as to what was going on in Ireland during the terrible years from 1878 to 1886 that I was found fault with. I continued to act as *Daily News* correspondent up to 1889, sending the news in a somewhat bald form, and avoiding anything in the shape of comment. What happened in 1889 and that which led up to it are related in another chapter.

Reporters in Ireland frequently ran considerable risk of injury during Land League times from other causes than unpopularity with the Nationalist party. After Mr. Parnell's arrest in October, 1881, for urging the non-payment of rent, there were demonstrations of protest in Dublin and elsewhere. Crowds assembled in the principal Dublin thoroughfares at night, but chiefly in Sackville Street, especially in the neighbourhood of the General Post Office. The police and military were kept on special duty ; they tried to clear the street of the mob, and the mob was not the only occupier of the thoroughfare, for the journalists found it necessary to be on the spot to enable them to give an account of the disturbances. I was there with the others, and amongst them was young Caulfield Houston, then connected with a Dublin paper, but afterwards better known as the gentleman through whom *The Times* purchased the letter purporting to have been written by Parnell, but which had actually been forged by Pigott, and in which Parnell was made to say " though I regret the accident of Lord Cavendish's death, I cannot

refuse to admit that Mr. Burke got his deserts." When trying to get out of the way of a rush by the military Houston was wounded by a sword thrust from one of the soldiers before he could get into the only place of refuge for the Pressmen, the Post Office.

I had myself an anxious time of it on one occasion a year or two later. I was directed to proceed to Derry to attend a meeting which was to be addressed by, or rather a lecture which was to be delivered by, Mr. Charles Dawson, a Nationalist M.P. The principal reason for sending was, not to report the lecture, but to report the nature of the reception given to Mr. Dawson in the Maiden City, the headquarters of the Apprentice Boys. Mr. Dawson and I travelled together from Dublin to Derry; we had frequently met before, and had interesting and almost continuous conversation during the journey. On our arrival at Derry station we found a considerable crowd of sympathisers present, and so far the reception was enthusiastic enough. Mr. Dawson got on a car and proceeded towards the city proper, which is on the other side of the Foyle. I got on a car by myself and followed, keeping well up to Mr. Dawson. By the time the procession, which was of rather straggling formation, reached the Diamond, in the centre of which was the Corporation Hall, the scene of many a grave disturbance between Orangemen and Nationalists during the preceding half century, the two parties got pretty well mixed up. The cheers and the groans were evenly balanced.

Very soon firearms were brought into play; I was in the thick of the crowd seated on my car while the firing was going on all around me. Eventually matters quieted down, and, if I remember rightly, nobody was wounded.

Another Dublin journalist, Mr. John G. Hill, received a sword cut on his hand in the course of a *mêlée* at Ennis, in which the military were called out to quell a disturbance created by a Land League gathering; he was disabled from performing his duties for a week or two.

A somewhat amusing assault, if it is permissible so to describe any assault, occurred one evening in the autumn of 1882. A Mr. Twiss, a gentleman of property at Birdhill, near Nenagh, County Tipperary, had incurred popular displeasure and was rigidly boycotted. He could not get his hay cut, and an emergency expedition was sent from Dublin in charge of two gentlemen who had already done good service of a similar kind elsewhere, Mr. Emerson and Mr. Dudgeon. They were accompanied by a number of "emergency men." On the train reaching Nenagh about eight o'clock in the evening, it was still daylight. I passed out of the station to see my luggage placed on the car belonging to the hotel at which I was in the habit of staying and which was owned by a Nationalist M.P. The driver knew me and gave me his customary welcome. I returned inside the station to join the two other journalists who had come on the same errand as myself. When we went out to the car-stand I learned

that someone had knocked down the driver, and I had to take another car. Mr. Dudgeon, a few minutes later, explained the matter to me. He said he told one of the crowd that I was an emergency man, with the result that the man knocked down the driver for daring, as he thought, to drive an emergency man.

It may help to give an idea of the energy displayed by journalists in those days if I add that, after a hasty meal, we started from Nenagh to Birdhill, a distance of eight miles, at 9 p.m., picked up a fair amount of information, returned to Nenagh, wrote our despatches and had them telegraphed in good time for next morning's issue.

There are thirteen courts contained in that strangely named cluster of buildings the "Four Courts," in Dublin. In two of the thirteen it is almost impossible to hear. They were both built for use as Bankruptcy Courts, and were so used up to the early nineties. Up to that time two judges were engaged solely in hearing bankruptcy matters, and both sat twice a week. The business however gradually diminished, and when Judge Miller died about the time mentioned, the Treasury seized the opportunity of arranging, not only that one judge should in future take charge of the whole bankruptcy business, but that he should also be available as a judge of the King's Bench Division and assist there when not required in the Bankruptcy Court. Judge Boyd, who had been for a number of years the colleague of Judge Miller, was then made a

Justice of the King's Bench Division, a promotion which had been virtually promised him on his appointment originally as a Judge of the Bankruptcy Court. His salary of course was increased to the same amount as that received by the other puisne Judges of the King's Bench Division. Mr. Justice Boyd, up to about three years ago, held two bankruptcy sittings weekly; but the amount of work to be done continued to dwindle, and about the middle of 1908 he determined that in future he would sit only once a week, at the same time always holding himself ready to hold a special sitting if necessity should arise. The vacated bankruptcy court was converted on Judge Miller's death into the Land Commission Court, where the nature of the business done does not seem to require good acoustic properties.

The acoustic properties of the two Bankruptcy Courts were so bad that various attempts were made to effect an improvement, putting wires across the court for instance, but these, after a trial of some twenty years were removed as of no avail. The best courts for hearing are the smaller ones—Mr Justice Ross's Court, the Probate Court and the Land Judge's Receiver Court, the last-mentioned now seldom required. One of the larger courts, No. 1 Nisi Prius, is not only good for hearing in, but it has not—at least to the same extent as the others—one most serious defect, namely, two ledges, one in front of the occupiers of the Judicial Bench, and the other in front of the Registrar's Bench, so high that it is with great difficulty that the Judges

can be heard where the reporters sit, immediately under the Registrar's Bench. I am personally aware of an instance in which judgment was delivered in the Court of Appeal in 1908 in which the solicitor for the appellants after listening for three-quarters of an hour to the judgments of the learned judges on an important question of law affecting insurance companies, declared that if he had not been well aware of the nature of the case he would not have known what their lordships' decision was. The other courts are very little better. A great deal of course depends on the way in which the judge delivers himself. Some speak well, in such good voice and so deliberately, not necessarily slowly, that there is no difficulty in hearing them even in a badly constructed court. Notable amongst these is the Lord Chief Baron, whose clear enunciation at all times, whether reading his judgment or delivering it extempore, ensures his being heard in every part of the court.

I had recently a conversation with one of the judges of the High Court on this subject. He informed me that the barristers practising in his court, who are in a better position for hearing than the reporters, frequently complained that they could not hear him, while, his lordship added, he could hear them perfectly. I pointed out that he was on a higher level than the barristers, and as sound travels upward this probably was the real solution of the seeming puzzle. I took advantage of the opportunity to bring under his lordship's notice the grievance of the reporters who

practice in his court in regard to the matter. The Long Vacation is even longer in Ireland than in England, extending as it does to the 25th of October, whereas in England the courts resume business on the 22nd. Some amusing things take place during the Long Vacation. The vacation judge is, not unfrequently, one who presides in one or other of the Courts of the Chancery Divison and who, when at the Bar, had probably very few briefs in common law cases, and possibly none either in Bankruptcy or Admiralty. Bankruptcy business goes on as usual during the Long Vacation, whereas only pressing motions are heard in the other courts. The "practice of the court" counts for a good deal in the administration of the law, and it is not to be expected that a judge who has, perhaps, never held a brief in a bankruptcy case, would be thoroughly conversant with the practice of that court. Instances have cropped up during the last few years in which the Vacation Judge has openly expressed his disapproval of the "practice of the court," but, nevertheless has given his decision in accordance with it. In one case some years ago, in hearing an arrangement case, in which the debtor had the statutory majority in number and value of his creditors in support of the arrangement and was entitled to carry it, there being no opposition, the Vacation Judge said "where do I come in"? He good-humouredly enjoyed the joke when told that he did not come in at all.

On one occasion I had what I may call a unique experience, I think it was in 1885. The reservoir for a new water supply to the township of Rathmines (a suburb of Dublin) was in course of construction, and was well on towards completion when it was suddenly discovered that at one end of the embankment, the hill up against which it was to be constructed was composed of sand, and it was accordingly found necessary to dig into and under the mountain side for a very considerable distance, about forty or fifty yards, and to excavate to a depth of about eighty feet in order to replace the sand by more effective materials for preventing leakage. At the time I visited it the excavation had been completed and the filling in of this underground portion of the embankment was proceeding. The descent to the level at which the men were working was by a succession of ladders ; the place had a weird look, the only light being supplied by candles. The process going on was what is known as "puddling," that is, mixing clay and sand, which was then trodden upon by the workmen or " puddlers " so as to mix the materials sufficiently and bring them to a proper consistency to make them impervious to water. The overhead portion of the mountain thus excavated—a very large space—was propped up by wooden pillars. The proceeding indeed was, as I thought, not unattended by serious danger to the men thus working literally in the bowels of the earth. The work was completed, however, without any accident occurring.

CHAPTER VII.

Limerick to Skye—A Non-stop Journey.

It was close upon midnight on a Wednesday early in April, 1882, when, as I was sitting in an upper room of the Post Office premises in Limerick, finishing my despatch describing the third day of the evictions on Lord Cloncurry's Murroe estate, I was handed a telegram which puzzled me not a little. Let me however say first of all a few words about the evictions I have mentioned before I proceed with the more immediate subject of this chapter. About thirty of Lord Cloncurry's tenants had been evicted during the three days. The Sheriff was protected in carrying out the evictions by about fifty police, Mr. Clifford Lloyd, R.M.—at that time a terror to law-breakers in Ireland—being the magistrate in charge of the evicting force The unfortunate tenants had, in the preceding August at a period of Land League madness, been persuaded to allow the sheriff to sell their interest in their farms for a nominal sum rather than pay their rents, which there was every reason to believe they were all perfectly

able and willing to do. They now offered very little resistance to the sheriff. They had, in obedience to clerical advice, parted with the legal title to their land, and their chief adviser, the Rev. David Humphreys, C.C., now a parish priest, moved about encouraging them with the hope, which proved quite illusory, that they would very soon be restored to their farms. The tenants professed to share Father Humphrey's sanguine expectations ; but more than once in the course of the three days' campaign I came across big brawny men, the heads of families, who, with tears coursing down their cheeks, confided to me their doubts as to the result of all this bravado. In the course of the proceedings one of the emergency men having seen some of the tenants talking to me assumed that I was advising them to continue to resist and so intimated to Mr. Lloyd, who, however, knowing me well, ignored the unfounded representation.

I was, as I have said, writing the closing passages of the third day's proceedings, together with some particulars of the murder of an " emergency man " which had occurred in the district, when the telegram was put into my hand. It was from the chief of the staff of the Dublin paper to which I was attached, and it requested me to return to Dublin by the first train next morning in order to go to Scotland. Now the visits of a Dublin journalist to North Britain are not, in the ordinary course, of frequent occurrence. I asked the telegraphist who had handed me the telegram if any-

thing of exceptional interest had occurred in Scotland to account for my sudden recall, for the Murroe evictions were not quite completed and the inquest on the murdered emergency man had yet to be held. "There have been some disturbances in Skye" was the telegraphist's reply, and the mystery was solved. I wired to the chief to ask whether it would not do to return to Dublin by a later train than the first, which started at the inconveniently early hour of seven in the morning. Having got a reply in the negative I wired "all right" and handed in a message addressed to my wife, but with directions not to transmit it till next morning, asking her to meet me at the railway terminus in Dublin at one o'clock and to be prepared to accompany me on a journey to Scotland. My wife obeyed the summons; but as it had been discovered in the meantime that the steamer for Glasgow, by which it was decided I should travel, was not to start until five o'clock in the afternoon we had three hours to supplement our preparations for the journey that had been so hurriedly ordered. Glasgow was reached about nine o'clock next (Friday) morning. There was no steamer leaving for the Hebrides which would reach Portree before Monday evening, and, as I was determined to be there by Sunday at latest, I made up my mind to push on by train. The first train for the North was timed to leave Glasgow at one o'clock, so in the interval I called at the Post Office and gave the necessary notice that I would hand in a press message

of 4,000 words at Portree on Sunday evening. I also telegraphed to the Post Office at Perth that I should that (Friday) afternoon hand in there a message of 1,500 words. In Glasgow, and on my way north, I got the latest editions of the newspapers of that day, and from the information thus obtained I prepared my first message, which, on my arrival at Perth station, I handed to a telegraph messenger with instructions to convey it to the chief office in the city. In that message, which would appear next (Saturday) morning, I promised a contribution direct from Portree in time for publication in the next issue, that is, on Monday. It was, as the sequel will show, rather a rash promise, but I was able to keep it. The train reached Blair Athol about six o'clock in the evening; we were compelled to break our journey there, for there was no train going farther north until the arrival of the night mail, which was due at Blair Athol at a quarter to two in the morning. We dined comfortably at the hotel which adjoins the station, and there was still twilight enough after dinner to enable us to take a most enjoyable stroll amidst the majestic scenery—I know of no more truly expressive description—in the vicinity. The train, as I have said, was not due till a quarter to two o'clock, but the Blair Athol Hotel folk keep something like what is known in Scotland as "elder's hours"; they go to bed at eleven o'clock and insist on visitors doing the same. This was rather a novel experience for one who had for many years spent so

much of his time in hotels in Ireland, where a guest can always occupy the coffee-room until the night mail train passes, at all events up to two in the morning. There was nothing for it, however, when eleven o'clock arrived but to go to bed or leave the hotel. To go to bed and get up again in a couple of hours was out of the question, especially as, in an establishment conducted on such lines, we should probably have had to "call" ourselves. The only alternative accordingly was to leave the hotel. An effort was successfully made to mitigate the difficulties of the situation by a suggestion that we might get one of the railway porters to light a fire in the waiting room, and that, as there was a comfortable sofa in it, we might rest there until the arrival of the train, when the porter, if we should happen to fall asleep, would call us. Thankful for small mercies, as we were under the circumstances, the suggestion was readily availed of. The waiting room proved to be comfortable enough, the promised fire was quickly forthcoming, my wife took one corner of the sofa and I the other, and in a semi-recumbent position we dosed more or less profoundly until on the approach of the train the porter roused us and we again got "aboard," as they say in America. The hotel people were perfectly civil; but the peculiar character of their arrangements vividly recalled to my memory a dispute which gained much publicity in Scotland in the early fifties and got into the columns of *Punch*, and arising out of which the "dead" walls of

Glasgow were placarded with a few lines of "doggerel" verse of which I cannot now remember more than—

> "Quoth the sour Duke of Athol:
> 'I'll mak you be civil.
> . . . No passage this way.'"

The dispute arose out of the refusal of His Grace to allow a continuance of the use by tourists of a right of way over a mountainous portion of his estate known as Glen Tilt. I remember little else except, I think, a short delay at Forres Junction until we reached Inverness at eight in the morning (Saturday). The train for Strome Ferry, the terminus of our railway journey, did not start until nine. We had, therefore, an hour for breakfast; unfortunately we had no time to make acquaintance with the capital of the North of Scotland. At Strome Ferry there was an interval of an hour in which we were enabled to lunch before starting by mail car, or rather omnibus which was to take us half way to Kyleakin Ferry, where we should take leave of the main land; the second half of the journey being by a single horse "machine," as vehicles of all kinds are called in that part of the country. The distance between the main land and the island of Skye at Kyleakin is not more than two or three hundred yards. The mail car was in waiting at the far side, and on this we proceeded without delay, indeed with remarkable punctuality, for Broadford, a distance, as well as I remember of about twelve miles. It was

between six and seven o'clock on Saturday evening when we reached Broadford. We were still twenty-four miles from Portree, and I regarded it as essential that I should reach there that night. But a double-distilled "Scotch mist" was falling, and, moreover, both my wife and I were very much fatigued. Add to this that the driver represented that the road was rough and hilly and in fact dangerous for night travelling, and it will be readily understood that not much persuasion was needed to get us to abandon the idea of proceeding farther that night. There were difficulties, however, in the way of adopting even this course. First, the only hotel in the district was in course of re-construction, and there would consequently be some trouble in getting accommodation for the night; and, secondly, there was a prospect of a further difficulty in getting a "machine" to take us to Portree the following day —Sunday. Both these obstacles were surmounted through the kindness of the local postmistress, Mrs. Sutherland, who put us up comfortably for the night, and, what was of at least equal importance, induced the owner of a "machine" to promise to break the Sabbath next morning and convey us to Portree. I tried before going to bed to write something about the Skye Crofters, but I soon found that the brain had not power left to command the movements of the fingers, and that the pen would do little more than produce a representation of the erratic movements of a fly or a spider on the paper before me.

Nine o'clock was fixed for the start on Sunday morning, and we departed, this time also, with commendable punctuality, taking with us Mrs. Sutherland who was anxious to pay a visit to Portree. I had determined to visit "the Braes," the scene of the disturbance, on my way to Portree, so that I might glean as much information as possible before arriving at our destination. But we had not left Broadford more than a mile behind us when, in conversation with our driver, I learned that we must go into, or nearly into, Portree before we could go to "the Braes"; a long detour. I have always had a weakness for studying the map when I am travelling, especially if I am in a district which is new to me, and the result of my study on this occasion showed me that Portree was almost due north of Broadford, and that "the Braes" was eight or nine miles due south of Portree. I therefore said it must surely be possible to get to "the Braes" without going first to Portree. "Yes, but you must cross an arm of the sea," was the reply. A boat would, we were informed, probably be procurable, but not only was there no certainty on that point but it was also obvious that once on the other side of the inlet we should still be nine or ten miles from Portree. Mrs. Sutherland instantly suggested that there was still time to avail of the telegraph; a messenger, she said, could get back to Broadford before ten o'clock, when in the ordinary course telegraphic communication would close for the day. At

the moment, as if to strengthen the suggestion, a peasant lad was seen crossing a field in our direction and I hailed him. Mrs. Sutherland spoke with him in Gaelic, while I wrote a telegram on a plain sheet of paper, as was my habit when the usual "A" forms were not available. This telegram, addressed to the proprietor of the principal hotel in Portree, requested him to send a "machine" to "the Braes" without delay. The messenger was despatched, a gratuity being given of course, with strict injunctions to lose no time in making his way to Broadford Post Office. Our journey was then resumed and we soon had ocular demonstration of the fact that the warnings of the previous evening as to the somewhat dangerous character of the road were by no means exaggerated. The road was narrow, with, at times, steep, unprotected precipices on either side. At points there were steep descents leading to a roadway which at the bottom of the hill was little more than the width of the vehicle. Altogether the road was one upon which it would be decidedly risky to travel on a dark night. We reached the inlet—the mouth of Loch Sligachan—without any adventure worth mentioning. The point at which we should cross this arm of the sea was just where the Loch enters the Sound, but its width was not more than two hundred yards. There was no difficulty about a boat, so discharging our driver and entering the boat we were pulled across in a few minutes and were landed within a few yards of the

cottage occupied by Mrs. Nicholson, the woman who had been reported to be the most severely injured in the scrimmage with the police a week before. The house was better and larger than most of those occupied by Crofters which I subsequently visited. Its construction was most peculiar; it was U shaped and was only one storey high. There were at least four apartments, the only entrance being at one end of the building. It led first into a small cow-house, and leading off this to the right was a door which gave access to the kitchen, from which again a door led into another apartment and so on until you reached the extreme end of the building. There was not a single chimney, and the smoke from even the most remote apartment had accordingly to make its way out round a sharp curve through the solitary doorway already mentioned. So dense was the smoke that it was almost impossible for those not accustomed to it to pass through, and my wife, who did not enter for a few seconds after me, actually walked up against the horns of a cow before she noticed the animal's presence. Nicholson received us cordially enough, and both he and his wife disclosed all they had to tell without the slightest reticence or the least attempt at exaggeration or concealment. Having extracted all the information I could, we left for the purpose of visiting some of the other Crofters who had been in the affray. We had not gone far, however, when we fell in with a doctor who, accompanied by another gentleman, had come from Portree on

a professional visit, the first which had been paid to Mrs. Nicholson and which I learned was made at the request of the "Glasgow Land League." I returned with them to Nicholson's house and was present at the interview. I soon discovered that Mrs. Sutherland was acquainted with the doctor. My case being desperate, for it was, as I have said, of the utmost importance that I should reach Portree as quickly as possible to enable me to send off a long despatch that night, I was emboldened to ask the doctor to lend me his "machine," at the same time explaining the urgency of the case, and undertaking that in the event of our meeting the vehicle for which I had telegraphed I would send it on for the use of himself and his friend, and if not I would despatch a vehicle immediately on arrival at Portree. "To oblige the ladies in any case" was the reply made without a moment's hesitation. Before we had gone far, however, our expected vehicle appeared, and getting into it we were whisked into Portree in less than an hour and a half.

On our arrival at four o'clock on Sunday afternoon I found that the agent of the largest landlord in the island was staying in the hotel. He introduced himself to me, and the interview was prolific of "copy" of a most interesting description. This was a most opportune occurrence, having regard to the brief period available for getting material for a couple of columns that evening. Mr. M'Donald, the agent in question, was frankly communicative, and replied straight-

forwardly to the questions which my knowledge of the land question in Ireland enabled me to put in a pertinent form.

Intelligence of my coming had reached Portree before me and I was amused to find in one of the Inverness newspapers on the following day a statement that a representative of a Dublin newspaper (naming it) was coming to Skye, with the further observation that it was "not known whether it was his intention to take part in the agitation or not."

The fact of my arrival was speedily communicated to the clerk in charge of the special telegraph arrangements—a Wheatstone transmitter and half-a-dozen telegraph clerks had been imported from Inverness—for I had not been many minutes in the hotel when the clerk introduced himself to me. It appeared that in deference to the very strongly marked Sabbatarian views of the inhabitants the "punching" of the telegraphic messages—a preliminary to their being transmitted through the Wheatstone, and an operation causing a considerable amount of noise—was being done, not in the Post Office, a one-storey house, but in a back upper room of the hotel. I soon discovered that my visitor was desirous, apparently, of throwing obstacles in the way of the transmission of my message, which I informed him would extend to two columns or two columns and a half. He said the room in the hotel in which the punching was being done had been engaged by other pressmen. I replied that

I would engage half-a-dozen rooms if necessary. He then said that the other men had been there for some days (thus seeking to imply that they had a prior right to the use of the wire) and that as they had gone to distant points on Saturday, and the Sunday had intervened, they would have very long messages. I answered that as I had given much more than the full notice required by the postal authorities I was now precisely on the same footing as the others, even if they had been there for a month. Seeing that I was able to meet him at every point he at last promised to do his best, but intimated that it might be difficult to get all the work through. I said that all I wanted was to get my message sent in "code" turn as provided by the rules. This settled the matter. He was at last convinced that I knew all about the rules. When I further informed him that he might begin at once to transmit without waiting for six o'clock, when a lower rate of payment comes into operation, the matter was clinched. I resumed my writing and, although the last of my despatch was not wired until four o'clock in the morning, I had the pleasure of learning, two days later, that the entire two columns and a half was printed in Monday morning's issue of *The Freeman's Journal*, and further, that it had been telegraphed direct, without re-transmission, from Portree to Dublin. Thus I had redeemed the promise made to the readers of the Journal in its issue of Saturday morning. So ended what was to me a memorable journey.

I remained in Skye for about ten days, making during that time journeys to the most remote parts of the island. One morning I left Portree at five o'clock and returned at ten o'clock at night, having in the meantime travelled sixty miles by road and interviewed a number of Crofters, and also had a lengthy conversation with one of the landlords of the island. On one or two of these journeys snow was falling, and during most of the time the Cuchullin Hills which form so picturesque a feature in Skye, being visible from every part of the island, were covered with snow. On one of these journeys my wife and I had the gratification of seeing the wonderful Quairang Rock and other picturesque scenery of the island. Before leaving Skye I paid a second visit to "the Braes" and found Mrs. Nicholson (who according to a report published in *The Irish World* had been "ripped up" by a policeman) at work in the fields. Our return journey from Portree was made by steamer to Oban, and thence by train *via* the head of Loch Awe to Callander, and from that to Glasgow.

Among the journalists whom I had the pleasure of meeting during my sojourn in Skye was Mr. J. Nicol Dunn, then, I think, representing *The Scotsman*, who returned in the same steamer with us as far as Oban; also Mr. Senior, representing *The Daily News*. I had arrived several days before them. On arrival at Oban at six o'clock in the morning, with ten or fifteen minutes to spare before the departure of the train

although the refreshment room was open and the attendants there, it was impossible to get a cup of tea or coffee. I suppose I could have got whiskey, but, at six o'clock in the morning, that was not my favourite beverage. I hope this state of things has since been improved.

Perhaps I may add that during ten days in Skye I scarcely saw the Highland costume—the kilt—and rarely heard a word of Gaelic spoken. I remember only one gentleman dressed in the (supposed) costume of the district, in addition to the piper who was in the habit of attending at the pier on the arrival of the steamers and playing the visitors up to the town in expectation of a douceur. This agrees with my experience of fifty years in Ireland. I have been in the most remote parts of the south, west and north-west over and over again, and I do not remember seeing a single individual wearing what has recently been spoken and written of as the "national" costume. Moreover, as I have said elsewhere, I have never met a single individual, not even amongst the very old women, who did not understand English, and was able to make him or herself understood in English. There is more Welsh spoken in one Welsh county than there is Irish in all Connaught or Munster. In Wales, however, everyone speaks English fluently, and without anything in the nature of a "brogue."

CHAPTER VIII.

The Phœnix Park Tragedy.

A fortnight had just elapsed since my return from Skye when the whole country was startled by the Phœnix Park murders.

It was a busy time for Irish, and especially for Dublin journalists. For those who had more than one journal to write for, as had been my lot for the previous fifteen or sixteen years, the strain was excessive.

It is scarcely necessary to recall the circumstance that the Phœnix Park murders took place on a Saturday evening—the journalist's weekly holiday time; for during the preceding fifteen years I, like the majority of other Dublin journalists, had done more work on Sunday than on Saturday, or any other day of the week. The news of the murders undoubtedly spread with great rapidity. They took place about seven o'clock, on the evening of Saturday, 6th of May, 1882. The fact was known in the Gaiety Theatre between nine and ten o'clock in the evening, and the news was brought to me at my residence in

Rathmines about eleven o'clock at night by two of my children, on their return from a concert in the Dublin Exhibition Palace. So little credence, however, did I give to the statement that I went to bed without taking any steps to obtain confirmation of it. I was sound asleep when, at two in the morning, I was awakened by a loud knocking at the hall door. I immediately said to my wife "it's quite true after all, that's so-and-so," mentioning a journalist a relative of my own. My conjecture proved to be correct. I got up and dressed, and in a very few minutes we were driving together down Rathmines Road in the direction of the city, bound for the Post Office. Neither of us had any connection with a Sunday paper, and none of the journals which we represented would in the ordinary course appear until Monday morning. But we thought it desirable to lose no time in ascertaining particulars and in telegraphing them. The event was so sensational that we judged that, even if publication was not to be immediate, it was desirable that the editors should be in possession of the facts at the earliest possible moment. Accordingly we set to work at the Post Office counter. My friend had before coming to me acquired a large amount of information, and we continued to write till half-past six in the morning, by which time I had written nearly three columns and had it despatched by telegraph to *The Daily News*. I drove home and was again in bed by seven o'clock, leaving orders to be called at nine. I believe in sleep when

I can get it, and many times a much shorter period than two hours has refreshed me considerably. Rising at nine o'clock I took a hurried breakfast, and driving back into town I was in Trinity College Chapel a few minutes after ten o'clock. I had rightly divined that the event would be referred to from the pulpit, and of all the pulpit utterances of that day in Dublin none was more important than that of the Rev. Dr. Salmon, afterwards Provost of Trinity College. The service in fact was only partially gone through, the sermon which it had been intended to deliver was not given, but in its place an important address was delivered by the preacher upon the tragic occurrence of the previous evening. From the College Chapel I went to Christ Church Cathedral and subsequently to St. Patrick's Cathedral, succeeding in both instances in hearing the references made by the preachers to the event. The rest of the day and night, up to two o'clock on Monday morning, was spent in ascertaining and writing further details. Thus I had been, with an interval of two hours, working hard for nearly forty hours. The Dublin daily papers published an edition on Sunday morning containing an account of the tragedy.

There was little more to be done about the murders from a journalist's point of view for the eight or ten months which followed. There were rumours, of more or less doubtful authenticity, now and again coming to the surface and these were published " with all reserve." The police, wisely as the result proved, kept their own

counsel. Not only so, but some of the "information" which they supplied to the Press was apparently supplied with a view to lulling the suspected men into a feeling of security. There can be no doubt that the Dublin police were at the time acquainted with the identity of the greater number, if not all of the Invincibles. They knew at all events and could lay their hands upon the men who were the more active members of the Fenian Brotherhood in Dublin. On the Sunday, or at latest on the Monday after the event they had some of the actual perpetrators of the murder in the Lower Castle Yard, and some of the men who were afterwards convicted, with the informer James Carey as well, who had, before the murder, been arrested as suspects under Mr. Forster's "Coercion Act," as it was nick-named, but under which, nevertheless, alike in Dublin and in the provinces, a very large number of men were kept from doing harm, who were afterwards by due course of law convicted of the commission of crimes.

It ought never to be lost sight of that the same men who condemned Mr. Forster's Act—and no man need have remained in prison under that Act for a single hour if he were prepared to promise to have nothing to do with the agrarian agitation as conducted by the Land League—condemned, in even more severe terms, the Crimes Act which succeeded it, and which it fell to the lot of Lord Spencer and Sir George Trevelyan to administer. The main provisions of the last-mentioned

Act, and those which were most effective alike for the prevention, detection, and punishment of crime, were those most vehemently condemned by the Parnellites. The Act was not a Coercion Act in any special sense. All Acts dealing with crime are coercive, and nothing was more amusing to men of common sense than the talk about Coercion Acts. The Act was in reality an Act for the prevention of coercion by the Land League. Its principal provisions were those which provided for private inquiries before a magistrate, while as yet no one was in custody for the crime that was being inquired into; this gave the right to the Attorney-General to change the venue of the trial, and provided that criminal cases might be tried before special juries. Yet these were the very provisions upon which the Parnellites, and their organs in the Press, persistently poured out the strongest vials of their wrath. They are provisions which, when renewed in the Crimes Act of 1887, were denounced, and which continued to be denounced by the same party. Yet it was by virtue of the preliminary private inquiry that evidence was in the first instance obtained which led to the conviction of the murderers of Mr. Burke and Lord Frederick Cavendish; and it was to the provision for trial by special jury that we owe the conviction of the murderers, a conviction the righteousness of which not even *United Ireland* dared gainsay. Yet no one who remembers that, even with a special jury, aye, and what was called a "packed" jury Timothy Kelly, one of the two men

who actually inflicted the deadly wounds, had to be tried three times before a conviction was obtained, will quarrel with the statement that in all probability had these men been tried before a common jury they would have been acquitted. *United Ireland*, which shed crocodile tears over the death of Mr. Burke and Lord Frederick Cavendish, never ceased to denounce the law by which the murderers of these men were brought to justice.

There was great excitement on the announcement of the arrest of the "Invincibles" in February, 1883, on the charge of being concerned in the murders committed on the 6th of May, 1882. I happened to be present at an entertainment given a few evenings before by the Lord Mayor, Mr. Charles Dawson, M.P., in the Mansion House, at which James Carey, one of the men charged with the crime, but who subsequently became approver, was present as a guest, he having at the annual election a few months before been elected a member of the Dublin Corporation. The magisterial preliminary inquiry was held on the first sitting in one of the city police courts, but the second and all subsequent sittings were held in the County Courthouse, Kilmainham, immediately adjoining and communicating directly with the prison in which the accused were confined. The sittings were held week after week on Saturdays; and while they lasted I crossed to Holyhead by the night mail steamer and completed my report, together with a descriptive introduction for *The Daily News*,

the whole extending sometimes to five or six columns. This I put into an envelope (which had previously been entered in the "way-bill" at Westland Row station, Dublin) and handed to the officer on board whose duty it was to take charge of such communications. In this way the cost of telegraphing—a very considerable sum—was saved, and the despatch was available in London at an early hour on Sunday.

When the trials took place in April and May following, my daily routine was to attend court as one of a staff of five or six and do my share of a verbatim report of the proceedings. This report was generally completed within half-an-hour after the close of the day's sitting, and the evening papers would publish it up to within an hour or so of the rising of the court. When that hour arrived I put in an extra sheet of carbon and thus made an additional copy to be used for completing my report for London. After a hurried dinner at a neighbouring restaurant I proceeded to the Post Office and set to work, first, to reduce the report of the day's proceedings to manageable limits, and when this was completed and sent out, in batches, to the wire, I proceeded to write a descriptive introduction, generally exceeding a column in length, which of course was also wired. It was usually midnight, and sometimes considerably later, before I had finished and was free to drive home. This continued daily, save that on Saturday I finished my work on board the Holyhead steamer in the way already related, returning by the

same boat which left Holyhead at 2-47 on Sunday morning and reached Kingstown shortly after six o'clock.

I have mentioned the three trials that were had of Timothy Kelly before a conviction was obtained. In the first and second trials the leading Counsel for the Crown was Mr. Naish, then Attorney-General for Ireland. In the third trial the case was "transferred" to Mr. Andrew Marshall Porter, Q.C., then Solicitor-General (afterwards Master of the Rolls), and the verdict was, probably, in a large measure due to the change. The Counsel for the Crown also included the present Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, Lord O'Brien, then Mr. Peter O'Brien, Q.C., Crown Prosecutor for Dublin, and who also prosecuted with much vigour and ability in many agrarian cases throughout Ireland in that and following years. Mr. James Murphy, afterwards Mr. Justice Murphy, also took part in the trials.

Mr. W. E. Forster, who had been Chief Secretary for about two years, resigned only a few days before the Phœnix Park tragedy. His rule was not a very successful one. He was quietly received in Ireland, the Nationalists doubtless forming the opinion that as a member of the Society of Friends, a body which had given largely for relief of the distressed in Ireland in the Famine of 1847, he would take a sympathetic view of the state of affairs. Moreover Mr. Forster himself, for a time at all events, evidently thought that a policy of conciliation would work a desirable change in the

temper and attitude of the people. But for the leaders and their most prominent and most active supporters such a policy might have had a beneficial effect. But the great body of the people did not think for themselves or rather were afraid to do so, such was the terrorism of the " village ruffians " who were the League's best and most effective force. The result was that Mr. Forster's mild rule was a failure, and contrasted badly with that of Mr. Balfour, who, by his firm enforcement of the law, supplemented by his earnest efforts for the promotion of the material prosperity of the country, gained a large share of the good-will of the people. Mr. Forster earned for himself the name of Buckshot Forster by his advice that when the police were obliged to fire they should use buckshot as the least deadly. He himself had several narrow escapes from being shot by the Invincibles.

CHAPTER IX.

How I Blocked the Telegraph Wires.

On several occasions during my visits to meetings in the country or to other functions I succeeded in blocking the wires. My experience in telegraphing was greater than that of any of my confreres; I always took care that sufficient notice was given, and I also coded the messages myself before handing them to the telegraph clerk. In addition to this the first words of the message itself declared the time at which it was handed in. These precautions, however, were only calculated to secure my message being sent in its proper turn. Several times I found it necessary to resort to strategy in order to secure that my message should reach its destination in time. One of these was on a somewhat memorable occasion. A dinner was given in Kilmallock, County Limerick, selected probably because Mr. William O'Sullivan, M.P., the tallest member of the House of Commons at the time, was a resident of the town. Mr. Parnell, Mr. Biggar and Major O'Gorman, then, I believe, the heaviest man in the House of Commons,

were present. The proceedings were lively and interesting, and the speeches of Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar important. The period was, I think, in the late seventies. Major O'Gorman sang one or two songs, the one which I remember best being "The tight little island."

But to proceed to the telegraphing incident; a confrere worked with me and we got our notes very rapidly transcribed. As soon as about half a column was ready I went with it to the Post Office, a few doors away, and handed it in. In another half-hour a further batch of copy was available, and I proceeded again to the Post Office, but instead of handing it to an attendant I walked in behind the counter to the operating room and, as the first portion was not yet all despatched, I simply lifted for a moment the pages which were lying in front of the operator and put the second section underneath. This manœuvre I repeated as often as was required, with the result that the message was transmitted without interruption and without a break until it was completed; and, I take it, was all sent under the one code, thus implying that the entire message was handed in at the time the first section was supplied. This, I need scarcely say, was a bit of strategy. The outcome of it was, that while the full report reached *The Daily News* and one Dublin paper in excellent time, the other Dublin papers were badly hit, not more than one-half of the report being received in time for publication.

The rule of the Post Office is, of course, that each batch of copy should be coded, that is, timed when handed in, and that each batch should be telegraphed in turn according to the code, so that in a case where the work is heavy and has to go on late at night each reporter may have an equal chance of getting his copy through in time. I have said "an equal chance," but of course something also depends on the speed of the transcriber. I knew an instance in which a rapid transcriber arranged with one who was very slow and who put on each page less than one-third of that put on by his rival, that their messages should be transmitted page by page in turn. The one had a column in his paper next morning while the other had about one-third.

In Kilmallock, however, I had foreseen that the telegraph staff would be unequal to what was required of it, and accordingly I adopted the course I have described.

There was another occasion on which foresight and the precautions which I took in regard to transmission by telegraph served me even more signally. It occurred in the early Eighties—I cannot remember the precise date. Dr. Lyons (one of the Members of Parliament for Dublin City), who had zealously endeavoured to promote the re-afforestation of Ireland, and who was in fact the pioneer of that movement, arranged for the planting of a number of young trees at Glencolumbkille, in north-west Donegal. It was necessary to start by

the morning train from Dublin in order to arrive there in time for the following day's proceedings. The nearest village to Glencolumbkille is Carrick, where there was then, and doubtless is still, a most comfortable hotel, for which tourists and all who have occasion to travel in that quarter have to thank the Messrs. Musgrave, of Belfast, the owners of the property in the district. On the railway platform at Dublin in the morning I came across the representative of a rival Dublin paper. I had anticipated this as a possibility when I gave notice to the Post Office early the previous day. I then ascertained that no notice had been given on behalf of any other paper. The Post Office official assured me that there would be sufficient facilities for telegraphing a couple of columns from the town of Donegal. I asked for the further assurance, which he at once gave me, that should any other notice be given afterwards, too late to make the necessary additional arrangements, he should issue stringent directions that my despatch was to take precedence. I made arrangements by wire for a carriage and pair to meet me at the then nearest railway station to Donegal, four or five miles from that town, and to be prepared to go on to Killybegs the same evening. My rival as soon as we got into the train showed himself very anxious to ascertain the place to which I was going, but as he did not tell me his destination I refused to tell him mine. Later on he wanted to know the route—for there were two diverging routes available at a

particular stage of the journey, the one *via* Dundalk and Enniskillen to Omagh, and the other by Portadown and Dungannon to Omagh, and thence to near Donegal *via* Strabane and Stranorlar. I did not care to enlighten him and told him so, but he stuck to me like glue. I forget now which of the two alternative routes we took, but eventually we arrived at Strabane. From Strabane we took the train to the nearest station to Donegal. Here I found my carriage and pair waiting. My friend asked for, almost claimed a seat, and as my trump card, the telegraphing arrangements, was still in reserve, and nothing to be gained by a refusal, I consented. This part of the narrative may be shortened by saying that we travelled together that night to Killybegs and next morning to Glencolumbkille, and witnessed the planting of the trees which was preceded by the ceremony of blessing them, performed by Bishop, now Cardinal, Logue. All information obtained we started on our return journey on an ordinary Irish jaunting-car to Killybegs. While so travelling I wrote, as I had often done before, about two-thirds of a column which I had ready to hand in on arrival at Killybegs telegraph office, which I had also taken care to monopolise in my interview at the Dublin Post Office. My friend had also tried to write while on the car, but the day being somewhat blustery the greater number of the pages he had written were blown away and he had not more than twenty or thirty lines ready to hand in when we arrived at Killybegs. Up to this he

knew nothing of my arrangements with the Post Office, so, on arriving at Killybegs, he jumped hurriedly off the car and entering the Post Office handed his few widely-written pages to the lady telegraphist saying, "That's for the ———;" "and that," said I, handing my copy, "is for the ———-, and is to go first." "Yes," said the young lady, "that is so." The instrument in use was a "single needle," so I knew I had blocked the wire for a few hours, and, as the event turned out, my message occupied that wire till midnight. I meantime left Killybegs and went on to Donegal, which was the other and much better office I had secured a monopoly of, informing my friend that I would not further burden the Killybegs wire. A third of a column of his message came trickling through to Donegal till after midnight. It had there to be re-transmitted to Dublin; but I insisted on my right, and being able to keep the wire going with copy I held the telegraphist to the contract, save that about two o'clock in the morning I allowed the brief message from Killybegs to go through and then had my own taken up again. My friend, I was informed, was cursing over the wire by private message to the Dublin Post Office, but he got no satisfaction. The contrast between the two papers next morning I need hardly say was striking.

I have yet another instance to give of blocking the wires, but as that was only an incident in a narrative, otherwise of some importance, I give it under the heading "By Special Train to a Double Murder."

But here there may, not inappropriately, follow a few lines about the tree-planting craze, as some people called it. The movement did not make any progress in Dublin until about twenty years after the fruitless enterprise of Dr. Lyons and Bishop Logue. A few years ago the matter was taken up by Mr. Charles Dawson, formerly M.P. for Carlow, and with some success.

" Arbor Day " was fixed for an early date in October of each year, and as good a show as possible has been made on that day in recent years. At one of these, in 1907 or 1908, I was present at the " demonstration " at Fairview, a suburb of Dublin. Half-a-dozen trees were planted, one of them by the Lord Mayor of the city. The site was slob-land which was being converted into a park, a conversion which has since made considerable progress. The " ceremony " was a somewhat tame affair. At its close the Lord Mayor expressed to me the hope that the tree which he had planted would not be removed from the spot in which he had placed it. Evidently he was a little dubious on the point. In reply to an inquiry Mr. Dawson recently informed me that the trees, or rather shrubs, were doing well and that the Lord Mayor's request had been complied with.

As Mr. Biggar has been mentioned in the early part of this chapter I may here mention some of my experiences with that redoubtable member of the House of Commons.

Mr. Biggar was a great trouble to the Government, not only in Parliament, where his favourite amusement was to obstruct by reading long extracts from blue books; but now and again in Ireland he gave the police a good deal to do. I was present on one occasion when he led them a dance by driving round the country in various directions, sometimes going a few miles in one direction and then turning round and proceeding back over the same ground until he reached the point from which he had originally started. Then he would start off in a different direction and having gone a few miles would again turn and proceed to the place from which he had started. This sort of thing was kept up until about three o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Biggar's intention was presumably to address a meeting, but the police declined to desert him, and he was unable to get an opportunity of addressing even the crowd, a fairly large one, which had followed him in his peregrinations. Eventually the member for Cavan appeared disposed to make for a definite destination—Cootehill—where at four o'clock he and a number of Nationalists sat down to dinner in the hotel. Speeches were made, of no great importance, and the proceedings were not interfered with by the police.

This was not his luck, however, on a subsequent occasion when, as far as I could gather from what took place during the course of his travels, he was desirous of paying a secret visit to a portion of his constituency.

He had come the preceding evening to Enniskillen, County Fermanagh. I learned that he was going to start next morning, at the unusually early hour of seven o'clock. I ordered my car for that hour, and after a very early breakfast a punctual start was made. There was no escort, however, on this occasion, either of police or of Nationalist sympathisers. We travelled a portion of the country which I had never before visited, one of the places being Swanlinbar, on coming to which I knew we were in the County of Cavan. It was well on in the afternoon when we reached Blacklion, which I learned was also within the bounds of Mr. Biggar's constituency. Here we entered the hotel and dinner was served for Mr. Biggar and a number of sympathisers who had come there apparently by appointment to meet their member. In accordance with my usual custom I dined separately, a practice I only departed from in the case of a public dinner in the ordinary sense of the word. When dinner was over speech-making began; but Mr Biggar had only been a few minutes "on his legs" when Captain M'Ternan, R.M., entered and politely but firmly informed him that no speeches would be allowed. After some *pourparlers* Mr. Biggar gave his word that no speeches would be delivered; there the matter ended, and I returned to Enniskillen by the shortest route.

I had some curious experiences in connection with public, or quasi-public dinners; but perhaps the most

curious one was at Castlebellingham, County Louth. Mr. Thomas Sexton, then a Member of Parliament, was the chief speaker at the "demonstration" held earlier in the day. I found my way eventually to the hotel and was ushered into the room, not a very large one, where I found that the company had not yet finished dining. Some were seated at the table, but a considerable number were squatting on the floor, and in that position were doing their best to satisfy their appetites. A vacant place was provided for me at the table and I was able to dine in a civilised fashion.

CHAPTER X.

Speeches Followed by Arrests.

In the earlier days of the Land League, before the passing of the Crimes Act, there were numerous prosecutions of prominent Leaguers for speeches made by them in different parts of Ireland. At first these speeches were reported by members of the staff of one or other of the Dublin papers sent down by the Irish Executive to take special shorthand notes of what was said at the meeting. These note-takers, when a prosecution took place, were examined in court to prove the accuracy of their notes. They were all, to my personal knowledge, very competent shorthand writers, and were paid the usual fees. This state of affairs was soon put an end to. The Dublin Nationalist newspaper, *The Freeman's Journal*, denounced these men so strongly as to place their lives in danger, and some exciting scenes took place on the occasion of prosecutions in the West of Ireland. The result was that the Dublin reporters, not caring to place their lives in jeopardy, refused to act for the Castle in reporting the speeches made at the meetings. In these circumstances

it was necessary to look elsewhere for shorthand writers, and two or three of the staff of the then well-known London firm of Gurneys were sent over, and thus the money which formerly went into the pockets of Dublin journalists was transferred to those of Englishmen. Strange to say not a line was written in *The Freeman's Journal* denouncing or even protesting against the employment of these men to do precisely the same service which had been previously rendered by Irish journalists.

Personally I at no time took any part in note-taking for the purpose of these prosecutions. I have nothing to say against those who did, as it was in the ordinary course of their profession as shorthand writers, but I had quite as much as I could manage to do as correspondent of *The Daily News* and one or two Irish provincial journals, in addition to my duties on a Dublin paper. Subsequent to the period to which I now refer members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, having been trained in shorthand, assisted and eventually superseded the members of Gurney's staff. They did not however fare so well as Gurney's men, and frequently the attitude of the mob was such that they were not allowed on the platform, but had to take their notes standing in front of it, surrounded by a force of police. One of the most noted of the police note-takers was Jeremiah Stringer, and so famous did he become that his name was often applied derisively to other Constabulary note-takers.

As I have said I never acted as a Castle note-taker, but by my published reports in the newspaper to which I was attached I was unintentionally instrumental in sending one or two men to prison. The most peculiar case was one in which Mr. T. M. Healy, M.P., was the victim. On the occasion in question Mr. Healy went to St. Mullins, County Carlow, to address a meeting. We knew each other very well. I had often sat in the League rooms in Sackville Street at the weekly meetings and listened to him denouncing my contributions to *The Daily News*. He did not on those occasions mention my name, but, thanks to *United Ireland*, everybody knew who was correspondent of *The Daily News*. Personally Mr. Healy and I never quarrelled, not even in 1886 when he, truly enough, told a Glasgow audience that I, the correspondent of *The Daily News*, was the author of several *pamphlets published by the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union. On the occasion which I mention we travelled in the same hired carriage from Bagnalstown, the nearest railway station to St. Mullins. As I mounted the platform the Head Constable of the district asked me what paper I represented, an unusual proceeding, but one which did not arouse any suspicion in my mind. I told him. The meeting proceeded, and on its conclusion Mr. Healy and I started on our return journey. Darkness set in, but it was necessary that I should prepare brief telegrams for *The Daily News* and one or two Irish papers

* Five pamphlets—equal in all to about five newspaper columns

to be handed in at Bagnalstown, otherwise their transmission would be delayed until Dublin was reached, about ten o'clock at night. We closed up the carriage windows, lighted a candle which my fellow-traveller kindly held for me while I wrote my telegrams, about half-a-column in all, and these I handed to the telegraphist at Bagnalstown. Dublin was reached in due course, and my report appeared next morning

Some months later, namely, on the 8th of February, 1883, Mr. Healy, together with Mr. Michael Davitt and Mr. P. Quinn were prosecuted in the Queen's Bench for seditious speeches. I was present in court in the ordinary discharge of my duty as reporter. Imagine my astonishment when, on evidence being gone into in Mr. Healy's case, the Head Constable who had spoken to me on the platform at St. Mullins entered the witness-box, was sworn, and in a couple of sentences informed the court that at the meeting in question he had asked a reporter what paper he represented; that the reporter told him; that he, the witness, heard Mr. Healy deliver his speech, and that the report in the paper which he now handed in was correct. That was all the evidence. It was certainly a novel method of proving the accuracy of the report of a speech. Mr. Healy did not at all question the absolute accuracy of the report in any respect. Instead of that, however, he entered into a long disquisition concerning the many things that are required to secure an accurate report.

First, he said, the speech must be taken down accurately; secondly, it must be transcribed accurately; thirdly, it must be telegraphed accurately; and finally, it must be set up accurately by the compositors. This is an exact summary of his speech to the court; but he did not suggest that in any iota there was the slightest inaccuracy. As a matter of fact the report had not been telegraphed at all. The Court, at the close of the hearing, decided that the traversers should be bound over to keep the peace, or in default, be imprisoned for three months. They chose the imprisonment.

Another of my reports was, at an earlier period, the cause of Mr. Michael Davitt's ticket-of-leave being re-called. The speech was delivered at Borris, Co. Carlow. I attended the meeting and, so far as I remember, I was the only reporter present. At the close of the proceedings Mr. Davitt handed me his manuscript, as he had done on one or two previous occasions. I accepted it thinking I might be able to use all or part of it. I found, however, that it differed so materially from the speech he delivered that I discarded it and wrote the entire report from my notes. This was on Sunday, the report appeared on Monday, and within forty-eight hours Mr. Davitt was arrested, his ticket-of-leave having been re-called.

Mr. Timothy Harrington, M.P., with whom, personally, I was always on the best of terms, also gave me credit for having caused his arrest, not for any speech of his own, but for one delivered by a League

Organiser at a meeting at which he was present and made a speech.

Mr. Andrew Kettle, a prominent member of the National League, says that I was also, unwittingly, the cause of his arrest, not for a speech of his own, but because of one delivered by another speaker at a meeting at which Mr. Kettle was present and spoke.

Mr. Abraham Shackleton, of a Quaker family, was not arrested, but he was deprived of the Justiceship of the Peace for a speech which he made; but he lost caste with the Nationalists for having endeavoured to "explain" his speech to the Irish Executive with a view to being restored to the dignity. Mr. Shackleton shared the fate of most people who try to sit on two stools.

There was another member of the Society of Friends, one who was widely respected by Unionists as well as by Home Rulers, who took the Land League and Nationalist side in Irish politics—Mr Alfred Webb. Mr. Webb acted for a number of years as Treasurer of the organisation, and occasionally spoke, but always in moderate terms, at its meetings in Dublin. On one occasion I remember hearing him speak at one of the weekly meetings of the League in Sackville Street and expressing his surprise that the Dublin correspondent of *The Daily News* could find nothing more interesting to communicate to that journal than the record of outrages. We met frequently in the tram-car, as we lived near each other, and often entered into con-

versation about politics and other matters. On one of these occasions, sometime after *The Daily News* had followed Mr. Gladstone into the Home Rule camp, he expressed surprise that that journal had much less news from Ireland than before its conversion. I replied that I could only account for it by supposing that the conductors thought, now that it was a Home Rule organ, the less it published of Home Rule speeches the better. Mr. Webb who, as I have already suggested, had opened the conversation on the subject made no reply. At this time, and for two or three years after, I was still the correspondent of *The Daily News*.

Among my colleagues on *The Freeman's Journal* during the five years I was one of its members were Mr. William O'Brien, Mr. M. Bodkin, now County Court Judge of Clare, and Mr James S. Macartney. There were two others, Mr T. P. Gill, afterwards M.P., and now Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, and "Ghazi" Power—he was christened "Ghazi" in *The Freeman* office—who subsequently found his way to Khartoum and, it is assumed, was killed there at the same time as General Gordon. "Ghazi" was a peculiar character; he was eccentric, a true Bohemian, but had good stuff in him.

CHAPTER XI.

Some All-Night Journeys.—Glenbeigh Evictions.

During the years with which these reminiscences are mainly conversant, and especially during the years 1880 to 1883, I had frequently to leave town at very brief notice on a long journey, and the amount of travelling which I performed by road as well as by rail totted up to an enormous figure. In one week I travelled over a thousand miles by rail and more than fifty by road. The railway travelling in that week included three night mail journeys, and the earliest hour at which any of these terminated was half-past three in the morning; I had then to resume my journey, from Strabane to Donegal, at 7 a.m. This was on Easter Monday of 1881, on the occasion of a visit by Mr. John Dillon to the North of Ireland. A trip to Galway by the night mail was regarded as child's play, inasmuch as the train reached its destination half-an-hour after midnight.

The heading "Some all-night Journeys" consequently does not refer to that kind of travelling, nor to

mere night mail railway journeys of any kind, but rather to those in which after the night railway ride was completed I had to drive by road some considerable distance, and then before sleeping collect information and despatch my telegram.

One of the most memorable of these was a trip to Kiltimagh, a miserable village in North Mayo and not far from the Chapel of Knock. A report reached Dublin about noon that a girl had been shot and seriously wounded by the police in the course of a process-serving expedition. I was despatched by the afternoon train, but, as in the case of my journey to Loughrea on the occasion of the murder of Mr. Blake and his servant, the train was not a through one. My nearest station under ordinary circumstances would have been Claremorris, about ten miles from Kiltimagh; but the afternoon train proceeded only as far as Castlerea, Co. Roscommon, about twenty-five miles from Claremorris. Anyone not as well acquainted with the district as I was would probably have driven direct to Claremorris, and from there to Kiltimagh, which would have involved travelling by road between forty and forty-five miles, inasmuch as it was necessary to telegraph from Claremorris—the instrument in use at Kiltimagh being what is know as an A.B.C. instrument, which transmits at much too slow a rate to admit of a Press message of any considerable length getting through within a reasonable time—but my knowledge of the district enabled me to reduce the road journey

by at least ten miles. I had telegraphed to Castlerea to have a horse and car in readiness on my arrival, the train being due at about half-past six o'clock. When I reached Castlerea I learned the address of the Ballyhaunis hotel-keeper, and wired to him to have a car ready on my arrival at nine o'clock to proceed to Kiltimagh and thence to Claremorris, the distance between Ballyhaunis and Kiltimagh being about the same as that from Ballyhaunis to Claremorris. It was an evening in the early spring or the late autumn and nearly the whole of the journey had therefore to be accomplished after the sun had set. Not that this made much difference so far as any enjoyment of the scenery was concerned, for the entire district is uninteresting to a degree. The road to Ballyhaunis was due west and almost followed the track of the railway.

At Ballyhaunis, which I reached at nine o'clock, I refreshed myself, and then resumed my journey in a north-westerly direction. The horse being fresh we drove at a rapid pace and Kiltimagh was reached about half-an-hour before midnight. I called first at the barracks and elicited such information as the police were able or willing to give, and I have always found them willing to give all the information which the rules of the force permit. I next called on the Roman Catholic clergyman of the parish, and having apologised for disturbing him at midnight, he received me cordially and I need not add hospitably; he supplied me with all the information he had, and before half-past twelve

o'clock I was on the last stage of my journey—from Kiltimagh to Claremorris. The driver was not sure of the road he should take on leaving Kiltimagh, but I had driven from Claremorris to Kiltimagh and back on a previous occasion and was able to act as his guide out of the village. A rapid run brought us to Claremorris at a quarter to two in the morning, and here, standing at the Post Office counter, I wrote my despatch of over a column, and, having handed it to the telegraphist page by page, the entire message was in the hands of the sub-editor in Dublin by three o'clock. I learned from the telegraphist the (to me) pleasing intelligence that a representative of another Dublin paper, the chief rival of the one I represented, had come down by night mail train to Claremorris, but having ascertained that I had stolen a march on him proceeded direct to Ballaghaderrin on another mission, namely (I think I am right in saying), the murder of Sergeant Armstrong at Monasteraden, a few miles from Ballaghaderrin, but just outside the County of Mayo and within the borders of Sligo.

I spent the next day in visiting the wounded girl at her residence near Bohola. She was in bed in the kitchen, or more properly speaking, the "living room" of the family. They readily gave me her version of the occurrence, and this I included in my despatch for the following day's paper. The wound turned out not to be a dangerous one, and in a short time the girl recovered. No proceedings were taken to make any

member of the police force amenable for the offence, from which it may be concluded that the police were not to blame in the matter.

Another all-night journey which I undertook, and which was not so successful in its result, was on the occasion of the Glenbeigh evictions which, as well as I remember, occurred in January or February, 1887. Glenbeigh is a very remote district in the County Kerry on the south side of Dingle Bay, and there was a very natural inclination on the part of the Dublin newspapers to avoid sending special representatives to it, especially as eviction scenes were no longer a novelty to newspaper readers. The first week of the evictions was, therefore, allowed to pass without any of the Dublin journals I believe, being directly represented; the only accounts which they received were from their Tralee or Cork correspondents. Complaints were made that these accounts were one-sided, and that the landlord side of the question was not fairly given, or not given at all, even by the journals which were understood to be favourable to the landlord. The result was that it was determined to send special representatives from Dublin, and it was my lot to be chosen to represent the paper with which I was connected. I ceased to be attached to *The Freeman's Journal* at the close of 1885, and had since then been a member of the staff of the *Irish Times*.

I started for Killarney by the one o'clock train and arrived there a little before nine o'clock. I had tele-

graphed before leaving Dublin to Colonel Spaight, the Local Government Board Inspector, who resided at Beaufort, about six miles beyond Killarney, asking if I could have an interview with him about Glenbeigh on my way thither, about eleven o'clock at night, and requesting him to reply to me at Limerick Junction station. The reply was waiting for me there intimating compliance with my request, and adding a cordial invitation to put up for the night at Beaufort. This, however, having regard to my arrangements, was impracticable, for it was my intention after having interviewed Colonel Spaight either to return to Killarney or go on to Killorglin, fourteen miles further, and have my message transmitted to Dublin. With this object in view, I had given notice to keep open the Post Office at both these stations, determining to choose between them. When I reached Killarney and had made some inquiries I decided that I should push on to Killorglin and have my despatch transmitted from that place. Accordingly I informed the Post Office officials at Killarney that I would not require their services ; but unhappily I omitted to give them a caution, which indeed ought not to have been necessary, that I purposed telegraphing from Killorglin. The result was, that after driving the whole fourteen miles, first to Colonel Spaight's, where I remained until nearly midnight, and then to Killorglin, which I reached at half-past one o'clock in the morning, I found that, although the Killorglin Post Office officials were

expecting me and could have sent my message of a column in length containing the important results of my interview with Colonel Spaight, the Killarney officials had, on the strength of the intimation made by me, closed that office, and, as Killorglin worked through Killarney, communication with Dublin was effectually barred ; after a vain effort to call Killarney the attempt was abandoned. My laborious and, as I thought, carefully arranged night journey had thus gone for nothing. There was no alternative but to push on to Glenbeigh, about eight miles further, in the forlorn hope that I might reach it in time to send a short message from there. Just as I was about to start, an artist friend, representing one of the chief illustrated papers in London, and who had left Killarney a little later than myself, arrived. I joined him, and we reached Glenbeigh at a quarter to three in the morning. The Post Office was three-quarters of an English mile beyond the hotel ; but, still in hopes that I might be able to get through a brief despatch, and taking for granted that the office would still be open, I drove direct to it, only to be informed that there still remained untransmitted a sufficient amount of the work already handed in to make it hopeless to expect that anything I might write could be sent in time for publication.

This was the one occasion in all my experience that my arrangements had broken down ; I drove back to the hotel in a state of depression due much more to

this circumstance than to the fatigue which was the natural and indeed inevitable result of such a journey. I fear that I telegraphed something in the nature of a malediction to the Secretary of the Post Office in Dublin on the following morning regarding the stupidity by which, because I happened to say I should not require the Killarney office, I was deprived of the Killorglin one as well.

Fortunately the eviction proceedings of the next day were carried on in a part of Sir Roland Winn's Estate, which was only a short distant from headquarters, the very comfortable hotel at Glenbeigh, the centre as I subsequently learned of an excellent shooting district. Indeed, during what was called the Glenbeigh Eviction Campaign, we had in the coffee room the company of three or four sportsmen, besides, of course, the Resident Magistrate (Mr. Considine, now Assistant Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary), and two or three District Inspectors of police. The " tenant's friends," including Mr. Conybeare, M.P. (one of the most truculent gentlemen I have ever met), Mr. E. Harrington, M.P., Mr. Fry, M.P., and others, occupied a separate sittingroom, as they professed not to care to occupy the coffee room in common with the representatives of the Executive authorities.

It is not necessary to recount here the proceedings which took place from day to day in the wilds of Glenbeigh ; to describe the rough and tumble journey across a country where no car could travel, and where

the saddle-horse would have been the only practicable means of conveyance, in order to enable one to narrate the sad scenes which followed the eviction of a fine, hardy, and even stalwart peasantry, who as a rule were quite able to pay the trifling rent demanded of them—some of them did pay—but who rather than disobey the dictates of an irresponsible organisation, which had in advance denounced as "traitors" every man who should go behind the back of his neighbour, the word "neighbour" being interpreted to mean the man who refused to pay, allowed themselves to be evicted from their holdings and their houses to be pulled down before their eyes. I witnessed the pulling down of several, but I arrived too late to witness the burnings which had taken place in the first week of the evictions, and which were afterwards the subject of heated discussions in Parliament. The "tumbling" of houses took place chiefly in the district of Coonasaharn, and the occupier of the first house which was thus demolished, I was credibly informed, was quite able to pay his rent and would willingly have done so. The truth of this statement was confirmed on the following Saturday when I saw him driving in his own trap to an indignation meeting at Killorglin, which was addressed by the then Lord Mayor of Dublin (Mr. T. D. Sullivan, M.P.), Mr. Conybeare, M.P., Mr. E. Harrington, M.P., and others.

The salutary influence of the presence of representatives of the Press of all shades of opinion during the

later period of the evictions was shown in the altered tone of the Nationalist members, and in the more correct view taken of the whole proceedings at Glenbeigh by the public in all parts of the United Kingdom.

My trip to Glenbeigh, as I have indicated, did not end with the disappointing incident which I have related. I stayed there for about ten days and became acquainted, after a fashion, with, amongst others, Mr. C. A. Conybeare, M.P., who expressed his great disgust at the contents of my despatches to *The Irish Times*, and said it was a scandal that the reporter who represented that journal should be the recognised correspondent of *The Daily News*. *United Ireland*—Mr. William O'Brien's newspaper—gave expression to similar views, and it went the length, probably at the instigation of the member for Cornwall, of, as it imagined, quoting Dunlop in *The Irish Times* against Dunlop in *The Daily News*. Of course *United Ireland* blundered, as it generally did. It so happened that the importance of the Glenbeigh evictions, as already stated, was not thoroughly realised in Dublin until a week after they had begun, and it was only then that I was commissioned to proceed to the scene. This was how it happened that *United Ireland*, which might easily have ascertained the facts, was good enough to place in parallel columns a lurid description of proceedings which took place a week before I set foot in Glenbeigh (and which had been telegraphed to *The Daily News* by its Cork representative, or rather by a

deputy of that gentleman), with what I wrote in a totally different connection ten days afterwards. That was the only occasion upon which *United Ireland* ventured to put what it imagined to be my writing in parallel columns, although it had for years been denouncing me by name as occupying an anomalous position, because I was, as it alleged, writing in a different tone for *The Daily News* from that in which I was at the time in the habit of writing for the Dublin paper to which I was attached. *United Ireland* first quoted the following passage from my despatch to *The Irish Times* :—

> "The mask was thrown off at Glenbeigh to-day, and it is now made as clear as noonday that what the Parnellite Members of Parliament desire is not the prevention of the eviction of Mr. Winn's tenantry, but that the promoters of the Plan of Campaign might have an opportunity of showing fight . . . . . The interview to-day between Mr. Roe (the agent of Mr. Winn) and Mr. Conybeare, M.P. (the self-constituted champion of the tenants) which, happily for the interests of truth, took place in the presence of the Press of all shades of opinion, has demonstrated that Mr. Roe has all along been desirous of meeting the tenants in a most generous manner, and that the only obstacle to a settlement was the interference of the men who are so fond of posing as friends of the tenants."

This extract was introduced by *United Ireland* in the following words :—

> "Mr. Dunlop is another precious type of the journalistic Swiss. He has attended the Glenbeigh evictions in the double capacity of correspondent of the Gladstonian *Daily News*, and of the indescribable LIARISH *Times*. In the one capacity the wretched creature aroused the indignation of the English public against the atrocities of the evictors; in the other he assured the public that the whole business was an arrant Nationalist imposture."

How utterly false this statement is the reader now knows.

A trick was played on me on one of the last days of the evictions. There was a bit of a river to cross on the way from the hotel to the scene of the evictions; the only way of getting across was by wading and getting wet up to the knees, or by taking long jumps or strides from stone to stone, too far apart and too slippery to make sure of one's footing, and, therefore, quite likely to result in even a worse drenching than by walking through. As luck would have it, on my way out a woman offered to carry me; I accepted the offer, and was borne across safely. On returning in the evening, however, in company of nearly the whole of the party, a stout young fellow, who had been evidently put up to the job, offered to carry me across. I had my suspicions, but I instantly realised that I could not be in a worse position by accepting the offer than by rejecting it, so I accepted; when we reached the middle of the stream my bearer said

"Down wid ye." I instantly did so, quickly realising this was better than to wait till I should be thrown down. I then walked to the other side of the river, three or four feet. On arrival at the hotel, two miles farther on, I changed my clothes and was none the worse for the wetting. My only object in dwelling on this trivial incident is to take the opportunity of pointing out that, as usual, *United Ireland* gave a distorted account of the occurrence, and stated the deliberate untruth that all were borne safely over but myself, the fact being that I was the only one who was carried even half way across. Many others, including the only other Dublin journalist, had to walk through the river, the only alternative being the more dangerous one, viz., to leap from stone to stone constituting the "ford."

CHAPTER XII.

Hotels and Railway Travelling in Ireland.

I had some curious experiences of travelling. One of these was of rather a unique character. I have always had great confidence in the care which is taken of travellers' luggage by the railway companies, notwithstanding some incidents pointing in the contrary direction. On one occasion while I was travelling from Mallow to Waterford I as usual doffed my tall hat and donned my cap. I had to change carriages at Mitchelstown Junction, and left my hat in the railway carriage; I did not discover my omission until the train for Mitchelstown had started. At the next station, Lismore, I think, I got the stationmaster to telegraph to Mitchelstown. It was then about two o'clock in the afternoon. My hat reached me in Waterford about five in the evening. This was only one of several somewhat similar experiences.

I was travelling one evening from Killarney to Dublin; when the train reached Mallow I desired to visit the

refreshment room, and to do this I had to walk a considerable distance along the platform to the over-head bridge, and an equal distance on the opposite platform, a result of the non-existence at this and many other important stations on Irish railways of an "island platform"; the only two stations at which such a platform exists in Ireland, as far as I am aware, are Limerick Junction on the Great Southern, and Dundalk on the Great Northern. The deficiency is mitigated to some extent at Portadown on the Great Northern, and at Mullingar and Athlone on the Midland Great Western, by the existence of refreshment rooms on each of the two platforms. On the occasion to which I now refer I wished to avoid the trouble of carrying my bag to the refreshment room and back. I was conscious, however, of the risk I ran in leaving it on the platform, and the train in which I was to travel the remainder of my journey had not yet come alongside. I took a careful mental note of the exact spot where I put it down, at a pillar at the extreme end of the covered portion of the platform. On my return, about seven minutes later, the bag had disappeared. I mentioned the matter to one of the officials and told him precisely where I had left it. He advised me to walk quietly to the spot and look into the compartment opposite the pillar; I did so, and saw my bag carefully put up on the rack. I walked in and took it down, and addressing the occupants of the compartment, which was full, I asked who had been good enough to place it

there. Not a word was said in response ; I then said "There is evidently not an honest man here," and left. I afterwards learned from the official that there had been races at some place near, and that every man in the compartment—a third-class one—was a racing man.

I need hardly say that my experience of hotels was of a varied character. At the period with which these reminiscences are mainly concerned, or perhaps I should say at the earlier portion of that period, the hotels in the West of Ireland and, though not in the same degree, in the South, were, with numerous exceptions, of a very indifferent description. One of the worst places, and it happened to be one which at that time journalists were frequently obliged to visit, was Claremorris. It was my headquarters on many occasions during Land League and National League times, as also when I visited Knock. The accommodation was of a very inferior description. I tried all the hotels in the place but not one was satisfactory ; although rejoicing in the name of hotel they were simply publichouses with a few bedrooms. The owners did their best to make their guests comfortable ; but bad was the best. There has been a great improvement in most places within recent years, and in the West the Midland Great Western Railway Company has erected a number of excellent hotels. The Great Southern, the Great Northern and the Wicklow Companies have also provided similar accommodation.

The greatest trouble at times was when I wanted to leave at an early hour in the morning. On one occasion my wife and I arrived in Galway at midnight, and I gave orders to be called at half-past six. I was not called; as usual I called myself. But that was not the only trouble. I could not succeed in awakening any of the inmates even by the most persistent ringing of all the bells to which I could get access. Ultimately we had to take a very hurried breakfast and depart on an outside car en route for Cong, over twenty miles away, which I was bound to reach before eleven o'clock in order to be present at a magisterial inquiry regarding the murder of Lord Mountmorres. I telegraphed to Headfort, about half way, for a relief car to be in readiness on our arrival; it was ready, and in this way Cong was reached in good time. We found the little village in a state of excitement. There were several London and other journalists temporarily residing in the village, awaiting developments in regard to the assassination of Lord Mountmorres. One in particular, Mr. Pyper (representing the Press Association), was making himself conspicuous by ringing a hand-bell at short intervals. All the youngsters in the village, which contains less than a dozen houses, were gathered in the street, and it soon appeared that the ringing of the bell was the signal for the starting of a foot race, the competitors being the children already mentioned. This, however, was not the only use which Mr. Pyper made of the bell; early next morning

he went the round of the various bedrooms and rang the bell as a signal for the occupants to cease their slumbers.

Some enjoyable nights were spent in the same hotel. One of these was during the Carraroe disturbances, already described. The Constabulary force on that occasion included a Resident Magistrate (Mr. Hill), the County Inspector of police and six or eight District Inspectors. Singing went on for several hours during at least one evening, and provided the vocalism was good, there was no interdict on any song on the ground of sentiment. A number of favourite "Nationalist," or, I might say, "rebel" songs were sung, one which I specially remember being "The Wearing of the Green," the chorus of which was lustily rendered by this group of representatives of law and order.

Perhaps the strangest experience I had in travelling was caused by a peculiar mistake for which a Roman Catholic clergyman in the North of Ireland (Rev. P. M'Cartan) and myself were jointly responsible. It was in the late eighties, and I was travelling by an evening train to attend a Unionist meeting to be held on the following day at Strabane, Co. Tyrone. I had been in Strabane on many previous occasions, and knew, as I thought, the various stations between Omagh and Strabane. The Rev. P. M'Cartan and I had kept up a conversation from the time he joined the train at Dungannon, and we were, I suppose, so absorbed in the conversation that, although both of us were intimately

acquainted with the line, we fancied that we had reached Strabane when in reality we were two stations short of it. We got out of the train and walked a few yards along the platform when, realising our mistake we turned round with the intention of resuming our seats, we had the mortification of seeing the red lamp on the last carriage moving away; we had got out at Victoria Bridge Station, five miles short of Strabane. We immediately inquired of the Stationmaster as to the possibility of getting a car or other conveyance, but the reply was in the negative. While we were talking to him, however, I observed a delivery van about to cross the bridge which gives the name to the station, and a shout caused the man in charge of it to stop. It proved to be a soda water delivery van on its return journey to Strabane. The driver at once acceded to our request, and we mounted the vehicle and took our seats, necessarily in an awkward position, for the boxes reached considerably above the sides of the van, and in this not over comfortable position we made the journey to Strabane.

The railway system in Ireland has been greatly improved, extended and unified during the last fifty years. I do not know whether there was ever any railway in Ireland on which accomodation was provided for fourth-class passengers as there was on the Glasgow and Greenock railway so comparatively late in the history of railways as 1848. In these "carriages" the passengers had only standing room; there were no seats and no

covering. In fact it was a *facsimile* of a present day cattle waggon ; I presume the fares were very moderate. I never saw fourth-class carriages on any other line in England or Scotland, and if they ever existed they disappeared very quickly, as did those on the Greenock line.

Ireland being a little later in introducing railways had, in some respects, an advantage. One of these, I think, was in the gauge adopted, which is considerably narrower than the broad one adopted by the Great Western—finally abandoned a few years ago—and somewhat wider than the ordinary gauge adopted for nearly all the other lines in England and Scotland. In this way Ireland has a gauge which, from its width, tends to greater safety than the ordinary English gauge, gives a more roomy carriage, and yet requires very little additional space for the track.

In one respect, however, the result may possibly prove not quite so satisfactory. There is considerable talk nowadays of steamers, built to carry railway trains, and it is suggested that these steamers would be of great advantage in carrying on the traffic between England and Ireland ; but in this matter no account has been taken of the difference in gauge in the two countries.

At present Ireland is very well provided with railways, and the rolling stock on the four principal lines is very nearly as comfortable for travellers as that on the best English lines. The carriages of the principal trains are corridor ones, with, in some cases, communication

for passengers from one end of the train to the other. Drawing-room carriages are not unknown, and although sleeping compartments are not provided they are not much missed, as the journeys are not so long as in England and Scotland and, in any event, very few people travel by night mail trains. The fares are certainly not in excess of those charged on English and Scotch railways, and on nearly all the lines excursion trains are frequently provided at cheap fares.

The total mileage of the Great Southern and Western Railway—the most important in Ireland—is a little over one thousand, one hundred and twenty. It has two main lines, one between Dublin and Queenstown, the length of which is one hundred and seventy-seven miles, and another of seventy-seven miles between Waterford and Limerick. It has no less than twenty-six branches, the mileage of two of which is greater than the main line between Waterford and Limerick; these are :—Limerick to Sligo, the mileage of which is one hundred and forty-five, and Mallow to Rosslare Harbour, one hundred and fourteen miles. It will, therefore, be readily understood what a vast district the Great Southern and Western Company, with its numerous branches, serves. It not only covers by far the greater part of the South of Ireland, but its branch line from Limerick to Sligo of one hundred and forty-five miles traverses a district in which tourists can find railways belonging to other Companies, chiefly the Midland Great Western, by

which they can travel to the extreme West of Ireland, including Connemara, and afterwards proceed direct to Dublin by the same line, or they can go on to Donegal, thence to Belfast and Dublin by the Great Northern line, and the return journey to England may be made with the greatest comfort and speed either by the City of Dublin Steampacket Company's magnificent mail steamers to Holyhead and thence by the London and North Western line, or proceeding southwards by the Dublin and South Eastern, or the Great Southern and Western, cross the Channel by the new Rosslare and Fishguard route.

Unlike the Great Southern and Western Railway the ownership of a very large portion of which was obtained in 1900 by an Amalgamation Act, the Great Northern Railway was brought to its present extent by a gradual process of accretion. Even the main line (from Dublin to Belfast) was for a considerable number of years after its completion the property of three separate companies, and there were at least half a dozen separate lines in addition. These are now all owned by the one company, and the aggregate mileage is five hundred and forty-two miles. In addition the company work the recently completed Castleblayney, Keady and Armagh line of eighteen miles, and are joint owners of other lines one hundred and nine and a-half miles in length.

The Midland Great Western line and its branches has a mileage of five hundred and forty. It runs

through the central midlands, as well as the extreme West of Ireland, including all the Connemara district.

The Dublin and South Eastern Railway is largely a coast line, and runs through the picturesque scenery of the Counties of Wicklow Wexford and Waterford. The mileage is about one hundred and sixty. By the completion to Waterford a few years ago an alternative route was provided between that city and Dublin. There is a short line from Wexford to Rosslare, the property of the Great Southern and Western Company, which, as it is joined to the Dublin and South Eastern, provides an alternative route between Dublin and Rosslare for Fishguard.

I think, that having regard to these facts, most people will agree that "unification" has, all things considered, gone much farther in Ireland than on the other side of the Irish Channel. Considering too that Ireland is so sparsely populated the marvel is that the Irish railways have prospered so well. They are well managed; accidents are of rare occurrence, and the speed, as a whole, is satisfactory, some of the trains running at something over forty miles an hour.

CHAPTER XIII.

Some Disorderly Meetings.

By disorderly I do not mean those meetings that were dispersed by the police. The meetings which I purpose referring to under this heading are mainly those at which disturbances arose through a want of harmony between the different sections of the assemblage. Meetings of this class were not numerous during the first nine or ten years immediately succeeding the inauguration of the Land League agitation, and of those at which a disturbance took place there were several at which I was not present. I was present, however, at the meeting which of all others was most remarkable for the stormy character of the proceedings ; I refer to that held at Enniscorthy, County Wexford, while the General Election of 1880 was pending. Mr. Parnell's dictatorship was by this time pretty firmly established, although not so universally recognised or accepted by the Nationalist party in Ireland as it was subsequently, when even Mr. Biggar and Mr T. M. Healy had reluctantly to bend to it, and abandon in obedience

to the mandate of Mr. Parnell their opposition to the candidature of Captain O'Shea for Galway. It is scarcely matter for surprise that the man who, at a later period, proved powerful enough to suppress the "Father of Obstruction" and to silence the alleged author of the "Healy" clause of the Land Act should have been able, even so early as April, 1880, to crush the Chevalier O'Clery, as the member who had in the preceding Parliament represented the County of Wexford loved to hear himself called; Mr. O'Clery as his opponents, and these included all the staunch personal adherents of Mr. Parnell, at this period ostentatiously called him, now that he would no longer bow the knee to the "leader."

As well as I now remember the main charge against O'Clery was, that he was not sufficiently regular in his attendance in Parliament, and possibly, that he did not attend on some crucial occasions when the Irish Party were most anxious that their whole strength should be available, and when, too, it is quite possible O'Clery made his action suit his convenience. A lazy man can easily take advantage of his constitutional failing when he is expected to do that which he dislikes. Be this as it may, the general charge against O'Clery was the absence of a thorough and unswerving loyalty to what was then called the "active" section of the party, for it will be remembered that during the preceding Parliament the party which had been formed under the leadership of Mr. Isaac Butt had gradually split up

into two sections, one section adhering to the policy of their leader und the other taking up and actively supporting the policy of Messrs. Biggar and Parnell, for that was the order in which, for some time after the inauguration of the policy of obstruction, these two names were always mentioned. But Isaac Butt was now dead, and some time before his last illness he had been practically deposed from the leadership, after a struggle and a scene of which I was an observant spectator, and the salient features of which I shall never forget; a scene in which "the old man eloquent" —for Butt was one of the most eloquent speakers of his time, a time noted for the eloquence of the Irish Bar— with his confidence in moral suasion and distrust of all other means of making converts to what he considered a good and reasonable cause, denounced the new policy of, as he called it, "exasperation" as a policy which would so irritate and disgust "John Bull" that he would refuse to listen even to reasonable claims calmly stated by the Irish representatives. At that decisive meeting in Dublin, Isaac Butt rather than depart a single hair's-breadth from what he believed to be the only true policy, deliberately abdicated his position as leader of the party, a position which was regarded as carrying with it the leadership of the Irish people.

The Chevalier O'Clery was then more of a Buttite than a Parnellite; and when Parliament was dissolved in the spring of 1880 and a General Election was

pending, the Chevalier determined to seek re-election for his old constituency. But this desire Mr Parnell was determined to frustrate. A Mr. John Barry had been found who was willing to sit and vote as he might be bid by Mr. Parnell, and O'Clery must therefore be shunted. A meeting was accordingly called, to be held at Enniscorthy, and it was announced that it would be addressed by Mr. Parnell. The intention to cast aside the late member had got wind and O'Clery, who was not without a considerable local following, had evidently made arrangements for a very strong protest against the course which had been determined upon by his opponents. The platform was erected at the foot of the Castle Hill; there was a large open space in front of it, the ground rising gradually, as in the pit of a theatre, so that the audience had exceptional opportunities for seeing and hearing. Numerous adherents of both parties found a place on the platform, amongst the rest an influential Roman Catholic clergyman, the Rev. Father Furlong, who strongly espoused the Chevalier O'Clery's cause. The moment an attempt was made to commence the proceedings the uproar began. It soon became apparent that the supporters of O'Clery were in strong force in the immediate vicinity of the platform. Excited discussions took place on the platform itself, and rapid interchanges of question and answer between Parnell and his adherents on one side, and O'Clery and his supporters on the other. O'Clery was accused of not giving a sufficiently

active support to the "active" section of the Home Rule Party, an accusation which he declared to be unfounded. Meanwhile the demeanour of the crowd in front, and of the contending parties on the platform itself, became most disorderly and violent; there was dragging, and pushing and pulling, and not a few blows were exchanged. The crowd around the platform, as I have said, was almost exclusively composed of partisans of O'Clery, and they, on Mr. Parnell attempting to speak, groaned and shouted so effectually as to prevent him from being heard. Sticks were freely used, and so strong was the feeling against Mr. Parnell amongst those near the platform, that attempts were made to pull him off. In one of these attempts a man got hold of him by the legs and the Irish leader was in great danger of being pulled through one of the open spaces of the wooden railing of the platform, which alone separated him from the angry crowd. I was standing close by him throughout the entire scene and was thereby enabled to frustrate the attempt by taking my umbrella and bringing the knobby end of the handle heavily down on the knuckles of Mr. Parnell's assailant. Mr. Parnell struggled bravely with the tempest in front of him, but with very indifferent success. At one point of his speech a missile of some kind, well directed, and thrown with great force, struck him in the face. He turned absolutely livid, although indeed the proceedings all through were not calculated to generate good temper, and taking out his handkerchief wiped his

face, especially his whiskers, detaching from them the scattered particles of the egg or orange with which he had been struck. He then resumed his speech, but was heard so impatiently that the meeting was regarded as a failure from the Parnellite point of view, and it was considered necessary to hold another meeting at Enniscorthy a week or two later. The arrangements for this second meeting were better managed ; it passed off without disturbance, and the final issue was the discomfiture of O'Clery and the return of Mr. Parnell's nominee.

But one incident of the first meeting had a not uninteresting sequel. About two hours after the proceedings had terminated I was in the Post Office, whither I had come to hand in a telegram about half a column in length which I had prepared for transmission to *The Daily News*. Mr. Parnell entered just as I had finished reading over what I had written, and, after the usual "good day" or "good evening," he asked if he might look at my despatch. The request was an unusual one ; but as it was courteously made, and I had no reason for refusing to comply, I at once consented. He commenced to read it, and I followed his eye as he read page after page, until he came to the passage in which I had stated that he had been struck by an egg, I asked him if it was an egg ; "I think it was an orange" was his reply. Then he read on to the end of the despatch, which he handed back to me, with thanks, but made no further observation. The statement that

he had been struck was published in all the Dublin papers, and in almost every paper in the United Kingdom, on the following morning, and, as I have related, the fact was admitted by himself in the most direct terms. Yet the very next evening, at Navan, when addressing a meeting of electors of Meath, which he had represented in the preceding Parliament, and for which (I think) he was again a candidate, he, in his opening sentence, roundly denied that he had been struck at the Enniscorthy meeting, and expressed his belief that there was no place in Ireland where such an insult would be offered to him. When I heard this astounding statement I was inclined to mistrust my ears; but, as I was standing by his side in the recess of the window from which he was speaking, that was impossible. What other conclusion I could come to I must leave to my readers to put into appropriate language. My astonishment was shared by such other representatives of Dublin newspapers as had been present at the meeting at Enniscorthy, and in one journal, at least, the matter was referred to in strong terms in its issue of the following day.

Claremorris was the scene of another disorderly meeting. Some of the "Old Nationalists," as they were sometimes called (that is, the men who were Nationalists before the agrarian movement was amalgamated with the Nationalist movement on the formation of the Land League in 1879) never took very kindly to the new organisation. They seemed to

think that the Nationalist cause was being lost sight of in the desire to forward the agrarian movement. Moreover, as in all such movements, local jealousies sprang up. Some men had been taken by the hand by the leaders of the League and made clerks or secretaries, or assistant secretaries, or organisers, all with good round salaries attached, while others who, no doubt, thought their claims quite as strong had been passed over. Nowhere was this feeling of jealousy and discontent, combined perhaps with a feeling of distrust in the new organisation, so marked as in the County of Mayo, which at this time had as its representatives, Mr. O'Connor Power and, if I am right as to the date, the eccentric Rev. Isaac Nelson, of Belfast. Claremorris was one of the first places to be visited by Miss Anna Parnell after the formation of the Ladies' Land League, and here that lady delivered her first public speech, the meeting being held in a walled-in garden at the rere of the local National Schoolhouse. She was on that occasion accompanied by Mr. J. P. Quinn, who, before his transfer to Dublin, had been a resident of Claremorris. The meeting, however, to which I now refer was one which preceded the suppression of the Land League; for it was attended not only by Mr. Quinn but by Mr. Thomas Brennan. The murmurings which foreboded the rising storm were audible at the very commencement of the proceedings. One man who was asked to take the chair refused to do so, and at a later stage another man, a farmer, declined to propose

a resolution. The speaking had not proceeded very far when there was an ominous commotion on the fringe of the assemblage. There were shouts and groans, and exclamations of various kinds, all aimed at producing a disturbance of the meeting. So pronounced was the dissension that, before many minutes, Mr. Quinn, who throughout showed great personal courage, left the platform and with the aid of some of the supporters of the Land League faced the disturbers, laying about him with great energy, and delivering several well-directed and most effective blows. When he thought that enough had been done in this way he returned to the platform, but the disturbance was at once renewed, and an egg or other missile was thrown with great force and struck one of the speakers (Mr. Brennan as well as I remember) on the face. Mr. Quinn again left the platform and aided by his friends, including one of the Roman Catholic clergymen present, laid about him lustily, and comparative quiet was restored after a very tough struggle. In my published report of the meeting the following day I described what had happened. Mr. Quinn in a letter in which he purported to "correct" the report said the egg was not intended for Mr. Brennan but for someone else whom he did not name. The obvious reply, and it was appended to Mr. Quinn's letter, was that of course Mr. Quinn was the best possible authority on that point.

Another meeting at which there was some disorder was held in Sligo, in December, 1886. I myself was on that occasion, in a sense, involved in the disturbance. It occurred late on a Saturday night on the arrival of Mr. William O'Brien, M.P., and others from Dublin, amongst the number being Mr. Peter M'Donald, a wine merchant in Dublin, who was at the time one of the Members of Parliament for, I think, the County of Sligo. I had travelled to Sligo in the same train; Mr. M'Donald and I being well acquainted with each other had refreshments at Mullingar station. On arrival at Sligo about midnight, a procession was formed and the crowd marched to the Town Hall; I followed along with the representative of another Dublin newspaper. Mr. O'Brien immediately challenged my right to be present; I asked if the meeting was to be a public one, and added that as my confrere was present I did not see why I should not be allowed to remain. The reply was that none but members of the League—"The Irish National League" was the name of the organisation at the time—could be allowed to be present. I continued to urge my claim to be allowed to remain, and while doing so took a verbatim note of the conversation between Mr. O'Brien and myself; at last Mr. M'Donald moved that I should not be admitted, and, of course, I retired.

There were many other disorderly gatherings, especially during the time of the Plan of Campaign, when the Sheriff had to perform the disagreeable duty

of selling the stock of a defaulting tenant, or, as was done in numerous instances, his interest in his farm. One of those which I remember better than perhaps any of the others was held in the Courthouse at Thurles, County Tipperary. The Courthouse was filled with a disorderly mob, and it was with difficulty that the police could maintain even the semblance of order. The purchaser who attended on behalf of the Property Defence Association was Mr. Norris Goddard, solicitor, Dublin—a stalwart good-humoured gentleman, who would have been able to give a good account of a few of the mob if they had attempted to assault him. After the close of the proceedings in the Courthouse, the crowd still continued to parade the principal thoroughfare, and to throw volleys of stones at the police. This went on as late as six o'clock in the evening. At the moment, however, that the chapel bell tolled "the Angelus," there was scarcely a man in the crowd who did not drop on his knees and make the sign of the cross. Straightway, however, the stone-throwing was resumed, and the disorder only ceased after the departure of the obnoxious police, when those whom they had been brought there to protect left by train.

Shortly after the incident at Sligo already related, another occurred in the same town, in which I narrowly escaped being mobbed. There was a meeting fixed to be held on a Sunday, and a proclamation prohibiting it had been issued by the Lord Lieutenant. Among those

who had come to take part in the proceedings was the late Dr. Tanner, M.P., whose eccentric proceedings, in and out of Parliament, used to cause so much amusement. Early in the afternoon a crowd gathered in one of the principal streets, and Dr. Tanner, whom the crowd was following, would stop every now and again and "say a few words." The police were close by, and when they came up to Dr. Tanner and directed him to move on he did so at once, but only twenty or thirty yards and then halted again, and addressed a "few words" more, continuing to speak until the police again came up and stopped him. This was repeated several times. A little later, an attempt was made to hold the meeting in a field outside the town. The police, however, were soon on the spot and dispersed the crowd, which ran across the fields, the police pursuing. The leaders ultimately reached the shore of Lough Gill at a point where a row-boat was available, and, getting into it, escaped their pursuers. I arrived just as the boat was being pushed off, when Mr. M'Hugh, M.P., shouted out "Beware of Dunlop, the police spy." There was a crowd numbering at least a couple of hundred present, and within hearing of him; I made no sign, but walked away with the crowd as they proceeded towards the town, trusting for safety to the fact that my identity was not very extensively known. I was not molested in any way, a circumstance probably due to the tactics I adopted.

About this time the trial took place at Sligo Assizes of the Woodford prisoners for various agrarian offences,

including boycotting. When the jury panel was called, counsel for the defence challenged it on the ground that it had not been framed in accordance with the statute, and the presiding judge (the Lord Chief Baron) quashed it, and gave directions to the sheriff to prepare a new panel in accordance with the law, which he explained. The trials were adjourned until this could be done. The new panel having been prepared, counsel again challenged it; but the Lord Chief Baron, in an elaborate judgment, upheld it. Realising the importance of the matter, I took a verbatim note of the judgment. After the adjournment of the court for the day, the Attorney General (now Lord O'Brien, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland) sent for me and asked me to transcribe my notes of the judgment, which had occupied about twenty minutes in delivery. I did so, and in a few days I received a cheque for a handsome sum.

I may here mention a somewhat remarkable incident which occurred later at Tullamore Assizes, before Lord Chief Justice O'Brien. A man named Claffey was tried for murder. The trial did not conclude until about seven o'clock, when the jury returned a verdict of not guilty, and the announcement was followed by loud cheers in the crowded Courthouse. "Silence" was shouted by the crier in a stentorian voice; and the Chief Justice walked quickly to one side of the bench and personally arrested one of those who had joined in the shouting, and had him detained in custody. The

man was, however, released at the rising of the court. One of the most disorderly meetings which I attended during the whole of this disturbed period was held in Limerick sometime in the year 1875. It took place on the occasion of a visit by Mr. Isaac Butt and his parliamentary colleague, Mr. Richard O'Shaughnessy, to their constitutents, they having been returned for Limerick city in 1874. Mr. Butt had a few days before the meeting allowed me the temporary use of the manuscript of the speech which he intended to deliver; I had forwarded to *The Daily News* in advance a condensed version of it, and I had also left with *The Daily Express* a similar condensed report. The meeting was held in the Theatre—the largest public building in the city; it was crowded with a very turbulent audience, if it could be so called, seeing that for a large part of the time they refused to listen to the speaker of the evening. Before Mr. Butt had proceeded very far in the delivery of his speech, signs of disturbance in the form of interruptions presented themselves, and eventually the place became a "bear garden." The leader of the disturbance was the then notorious John Daly. Long before Mr. Butt finished his speech, which, in the ordinary course, would have taken nearly two hours to deliver, Daly seized an opportunity of striking in and delivering a fiery harangue, the substance of which was that the Home Rule Party, of which Mr. Butt was then leader, was not "advanced" enough in its demands, and not sturdy enough in

their methods. The meeting practically resolved itself into a debate between Daly and Butt; while the partisans of each maintained a more or less continuous uproar, by cheering or hissing, according as the sentiments enunciated pleased or displeased them I could not help admiring the way in which Mr. Butt kept his temper throughout the "baiting" to which he was subjected. The proceedings which, had there been no disturbance, would have been over by ten or half-past ten o'clock, did not terminate until after one in the morning, and it was an hour later before I was able to leave the Post Office after despatching my telegrams to Dublin and London.

There was a notable character in the Claremorris district known as "Scrab" Nally, a brother of P. W. Nally who was a defendant in the Crossmolina conspiracy case. "Scrab" lived in Balla, a small village five miles west of Claremorris. He was specially noted for shouting out strong expressions at Land League meetings, and many a "voice" in the newspaper reports was the voice of "Scrab." A story is told of him, for the authenticity of which I have good authority. When the "suspects" were released from prison, "Scrab" was amongst them, and, of course, was released with the others. Having spent the day in Dublin he returned in the evening to the prison gate and practically demanded to be re-admitted. The gate-keeper refused, but "Scrab" persisted, saying he had no other place to go to, and that he wanted to go

back to "his bed." The Governor of the prison was sent for and he at first was equally obdurate, but in the end consented, and Nally was allowed to remain within the walls of his late abode as the guest of the Governor.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. William O'Brien at Luggacurran, Lord Lansdowne's Estate.

I was the central figure in what, though not exactly a disorderly meeting, had a somewhat disorderly dénouement. In April, 1887, evictions were being carried out on the Luggacurran (Queen's County) Estate of the Marquis of Lansdowne, at that time Governor-General of Canada. The tenants, in pursuance of the orders of the National League, adopted the Plan of Campaign, and resolved to refuse to pay rent; the order for evictions followed. Several of the tenants, notably a Mr. Dunne and a Mr. Kilbride had large holdings, some hundreds of acres in extent, and they were both quite able, as probably all the tenants were, to pay their rents. The evictions had been going on for several days before it was my lot to be a spectator, and then it was only as substitute for another member of the staff, who wished to be relieved for that day. There was only one incident worthy of note during the evictions, the refusal of two tenants

named Kavanagh to obey the mandate of the League. At the close of the day's proceedings a meeting was held, as arranged beforehand. The attendance of Mr. William O'Brien as the principal speaker had been notified, and he, arriving about the close of that day's evictions, was received with enthusiasm by the crowd which had been present during the day, and by others who had no doubt turned up to hear the speeches.

The meeting was held in a field adjoining the public road, and in close proximity to the residence of Father Meagher, the Roman Catholic clergyman of the district. Father Meagher presided at the meeting, and his opening words were, "Three groans for the Kavanaghs," words which did not appear in *The Freeman's Journal* report next day. There was neither platform, nor accommodation for reporters. There were present a representative of *The Freeman's Journal* and myself (representing *The Irish Times*). We had driven on the same car from Athy in the morning, and the horse and car were put up at Father Meagher's stables. There was, as I have said, no accommodation for reporters, and we stood just behind the chairman and the intending speakers. Father Meagher's speech was brief. Mr. O'Brien followed, and when he had finished he moved backwards and came close up to me. What followed cannot be more accurately described than in the following extracts from my letter, published on the following day in *The Freeman's Journal*, to which it was addressed, and also in *The Irish Times* :—

"When Mr. O'Brien had finished his speech he stepped down off the trunk of the tree which had served as a platform, and turning round moved forward one or two paces and, addressing me in the presence of the crowd, asked me to retire quietly from the meeting. I made no reply until the observation was repeated in a louder tone of voice so as to direct the attention of a large portion of the crowd. I then asked why I should leave, and Mr. O'Brien replied, 'Because you are not here as an ordinary newspaper reporter, but as a spy.' I replied that no one knew better than Mr. O'Brien that there was not a shadow of foundation for what he had stated; I then retired, knowing well that on a word from Mr. O'Brien I should be forcibly expelled. I then went to get possession of my car, but the moment I got on it some men took hold of the horse's head. I grasped the reins and, had I been able to clear the crowd and the numerous vehicles drawn up on the road, I should have driven on towards Athy. My car, however, got jammed, and the excited crowd gathered round it; repeated attempts were made to drag me off. The crowd were shouting and yelling and groaning, and crying 'Down with him.' The driver got on the car and in his zeal not only threw my 'traps' off, but the rug which belonged to his master, the owner of a hotel at Athy. I made an effort to snatch my umbrella from him, but he brandished it over my head and then threw it to the mob, with one of whom it remained. Mr. O'Brien and the five or six Roman Catholic clergymen present were looking on all this time and were the nearest to the car. No one said a word in deprecation of

the conduct of the mob; Mr O'Brien merely observing, in a half-hearted way, that 'if it was my car I had a right to it.' The mob then unyoked the horse, while Mr. O'Brien and his friends looked on approvingly; the horse having been taken out of the shafts, the car was raised. Not till then did I quit my seat. Mr. O'Brien then repeated the accusation which he had made at the commencement of the interview. I replied, 'It's a lie, and you know it.' He made towards me with his hand raised to strike, but was held back by a couple of clergymen. He then, his face as livid with rage as it was possible to be, muttered something to the effect, 'Only you are so contemptible' . . . Eventually I left, and two policemen accompanied me to the nearest cross roads, about a mile from the place of meeting, to show me the way; I parted with them there and walked the rest of the distance, seven Irish miles, alone to Athy. Several cars, conveying to Athy people who had been at the meeting, passed me on the way, and some of these evidently gave the word to the 'roughs' of the town. As I entered a number of corner-boys were gathered at the canal bridge; immediately shouts of 'There he is,' and other expressions, which indicated that the word had come from headquarters at Luggacurran, were indulged in. I was followed by a howling mob, and a man who, from his appearance, I should take to be a butcher's assistant struck me a couple of blows. I turned into a publichouse, but the same fellow followed me and called on the owner to put me out. I was anxious to proceed, and I went out myself, but was again attacked, and compelled

> to take refuge in another publichouse. The same ruffian again followed me in, and when I refused to leave he caught me by the throat, struck me several times on the head, dragged me out of the place to the middle of the street, and there tripped me up, causing me to fall heavily to the ground ; all this time not a policeman was to be seen. I got up and walked on, followed by the mob, until I reached the Post Office, which I entered. Shortly after this a police sergeant came and offered me protection, and having remained in the Post Office for an hour transacting business, I walked with him to the railway station."

The first words spoken by Father Meagher in opening his speech—" Three groans for the Kavanaghs "—were, I have no doubt, the real cause of Mr. O'Brien's attack upon me. He knew I would not omit them.

The report of what had occurred reached Toronto a few days before Mr. O'Brien's arrival there and was published in full in the Toronto *Daily Mail*. It had, according to that journal, no little effect in bringing about the " warm " reception which Mr. O'Brien received during his visit to that city.

I have said that the Luggacurran tenants were " induced " to refuse the payment of rent. They were, as a matter of fact, goaded into that course. Anyone who remembers or who has read the records of that time knows that there was no freedom of action left to the tenants ; the fear of being boycotted if they did not comply with the behests of the League was a

terror to honest well-doers. So far back as December, 1885, a year and a half before these evictions, I find in *United Ireland* a report of "Another fine Demonstration," held at Luggacurran. The parish priest who presided said, that the men who went into the Plan of Campaign had the blessing of the people and also his blessing. Sir Thomas Esmonde, M.P., also spoke, and gave his experience of the result of a meeting of a similar kind at Monasterevan, at which he was one of the speakers. "It was," he said, "a big gathering, and resolutions were passed expressing the determination of Lord Drogheda's tenantry to obtain a fair reduction of rent, but that when they came to take action only thirteen out of one hundred and thirty tenants declared they would adopt the Plan of Campaign; the others went to the agent's office and said they were prepared to pay, and ultimately they had to go to Dublin and pay their rents and the costs in addition." Is any further proof required to show that the Luggacurran tenants were goaded into the adoption of the Plan of Campaign?

The Luggacurran outrage was widely commented on in Canada and England, as well as in Ireland.

Mr. David T. Arnott, then joint manager of *The Irish Times*, expressed a strong desire that I should go to the United States and Canada to report Mr. O'Brien's proceedings there. The task, I felt, would possibly be a somewhat dangerous one. This I would have overcome; but there was the much stronger objection that the journey would in all probability prove futile,

because without the goodwill of Mr. O'Brien, which assuredly would not have been extended to me, I should not have been able to get information as to his movements so as to keep abreast of him, and having regard to what had so recently occurred, I would probably not have been permitted to be present at his meetings. The project was accordingly abandoned.

CHAPTER XV.

By Special Train to the Scene of a Double Murder.

The year 1882 surpassed all others in the number of agrarian murders in Ireland. From 1880 to 1886 I was told off to report almost every one that occurred, and was sometimes spoken of as the "murder correspondent." On the occasion to which this chapter refers I was provided with a special train.

At two o'clock in the afternoon of the 29th of June, 1882, I casually entered the Editor's office. The Editor (the late Mr. John Blake Gallagher) addressing me said, "You must start for Loughrea, a Mr. Blake has been murdered." "Mr. Blake," I said, in astonishment, my mind reverting at once to Mr. Blake, R.M., who was then stationed in Loughrea district, and whom I had frequently met in the course of my travels in the West of Ireland. The Editor said he was not sure whether it was Resident Magistrate Blake (the author of "Terence Magrath") or not; he was inclined to think it was someone else. The murder had only taken

place a few hours before and the information which had reached Dublin was as yet very meagre. In answer to the intimation that I must go I replied, "All right," but added that there was no train from Dublin until the night mail, leaving at half-past seven. "Oh, that will never do," was the reply. "The four o'clock train," I observed, "does not go farther than Athlone, and that is thirty miles from Loughrea; unless indeed," I went on to say, "I go by a special train." "And why not?" was the answer. "Very well" said I, "I shall go home for my traps and return in time to catch the four o'clock train; meanwhile you will communicate with the railway company about the special." On my return an hour or so later I found that the telephone having been availed of a special train had been arranged to take me from Athlone to Ballinasloe, a distance of thirteen miles, thus bringing me to within sixteen or seventeen miles of Loughrea. I had originally suggested Woodlawn, a station within nine miles of Loughrea, but I was told that the difficulty of getting a car there had determined the point. "You should have left that to me" I said, and I pointed out how very easily the difficulty could have been got over. However, there was nothing for it but to make the best of what had been done. On arriving at the Broadstone terminus I found on the platform a representative of each of the other two Dublin papers, and as I talked to them for a moment the Chairman of the Company (the late Sir Ralph

Cusack) came up and addressing me said, "Here is the order for your special train"; this was an awkward incident, but it was, of course, altogether accidental. My confreres looked at me in astonishment as we passed on together to the front portion of the train and entered the same compartment. One of them grasped the situation at once, and resigned himself to the inevitable; the other actually got out of the carriage within a minute or two of starting time saying he would get the chairman's leave to go in the special train with me. His companion ridiculed the idea, and we both laughed heartily at his discomfiture when he found that his influence, great as he imagined it to be, was powerless in the present instance.

In any other company than that of pressmen there would have been decidedly "strained relations" during the railway ride to Athlone. As it was the conversation was not affected by the situation, although my fidgetty companion was not altogether in his customary good humour. He had scarcely settled down in his seat when he wrote a telegram, which, on arrival at Maynooth (fifteen miles from Dublin), he handed to a porter for transmission to Dublin. This, I subsequently discovered, was to the office of the paper which he represented stating the position of affairs, and urging them to arrange for a special train for him also. I felt easy on that score, feeling quite assured for several reasons, any one of which would be sufficient, that all his efforts in that direction would prove futile.

A further fruitless attempt to secure the same end was made by sending a telegram from Mullingar. Our train reached Athlone in good time, a few minutes after eight o'clock. My companions vacated their seats and proceeded to look for a car to convey them to Ballinasloe, the first, and, as it eventually proved, the last stage of their journey for that night. Meanwhile my train, consisting of the engine, one carriage, and the guard's van was being made up, and in less than ten minutes from the time of our arrival at the station the " special " was moving out, and I had the pleasure of kissing my hand from the carriage window to my two friends, who by this time had returned to the platform to see me start. In less than half-an-hour the distance of thirteen miles was covered, and the train drew alongside the Ballinasloe platform. A car was in waiting, and a glance at the horse satisfied me that he was fit for his task, a rapid run of sixteen or seventeen miles. The driver, however, evidently entertained some doubts as to my identity and the object of my visit. The news of the occurrence at Loughrea had reached Ballinasloe, and the circumstances attending my arrival, the very fact that I had come by a special train of which I was the sole occupant, had naturally aroused a suspicion in the driver's mind that, if not a resident magistrate or an inspector of police, I was at all events in some way or other an emissary of the authorities, and consequently a passenger whom it would be dangerous to drive across country, especially

after dark, and dusk was now beginning to settle down over the landscape. I sought to disabuse him of these notions and told him who I was—that I represented the great popular journal in Ireland, and that my object in travelling in this post-haste fashion was simply to get, at the earliest possible moment, particulars of the murder, or rather the double murder, for by this time I had learned that Mr. Blake's servant had shared his master's fate. Partly reassured, but still, as I could see, not wholly satisfied, my driver reluctantly started. When we were coming near Aughrim, which I knew we should pass through, I made an observation about its being the scene of a famous battle. "I hope there won't be any fighting there to-night," was his reply, indicating that he was still apprehensive of danger, and was not quite satisfied of the unobnoxious character of his "fare." I endeavoured to reassure him, and, at the same time, repeated the urgent requests which I had already made to him to "make tracks," as I was desirous of getting into Loughrea with all possible speed.

Loughrea was reached about eleven o'clock; I there learned that Mr. Blake was, or rather had been, Lord Clanricarde's agent. When I entered the coffee room of the hotel I found awaiting my arrival the district inspector, a local medical man, the manager of a branch bank, Mr. Taylor (a local landlord), and several others. I was well acquainted with Loughrea and with the more important and influential people in the town and

neighbourhood, and I had not neglected to make use of the telegraph wire on my way down. At Mullingar and again at Athlone I had used it to communicate with the people I have mentioned, asking them to meet me at the hotel at eleven o'clock that night. While a beef-steak and a cup of strong tea were being got ready for me I interviewed my friends—in fact I held a sort of levee—the interviewing being continued while I was "refreshing," and for some time after. By midnight I was able to settle down to work at the telegraph office, and by three o'clock in the morning I had written, and the telegraphist had sent off, about two columns of matter descriptive of the murder. I felt apprehensive all along that my rivals might turn up before I had completed my task, and, in accordance with the Post Office regulations, might claim to interrupt the sending of my message by handing in messages or portions of them. I knew that it was practicable for them to reach Loughrea about half-past one in the morning by driving all the way; I also knew that it would be possible for them, after spending perhaps an hour in Ballinasloe, to come on by the night mail train, and, reaching Woodlawn a little before midnight, drive to Loughrea and get there about half-past one. To provide against these contingencies I wrote my despatch on tissue paper, and by the use of carbonic made four copies of it. I handed in only one copy in the first instance, but as the night wore on I thought it advisable to adopt the precaution of hand-

ing in a second one (slightly altered) to a different address, intimating that it was not to be sent until my first message was finished. I thus effectually blocked the wire, in view of the possible advent of my rivals at any hour at which it would still be possible for them to get a message transmitted in time for publication. The precaution proved unnecessary, for the simple reason that my friends, or at least one of them—not my fidgetty friend—knowing the fertility of my resources under such circumstances, felt assured that I should block the wire in some way or other, and therefore wisely determined to stay in Ballinasloe, and send from there what information they could get. By dint of "spinning"—my esteemed friend Mr. William Ritchie was an adept at that—and references to the character of the district of Loughrea and to agrarian crime in general, he succeded in writing about a column. There was a great deal of chaff and not very much wheat; but he succeeded in saving appearances. His companion did not fare so well; all his efforts resulting in the production of between a quarter and a third of a column.

About half-past three in the morning, having arrived at the conclusion that there was no likelihood of their coming to Loughrea till next day, and knowing that even if they did they would be too late to get their messages through in time, even for a second edition, I withdrew the message which I had handed in for the purpose of blocking the wire, and returned to the hotel. The inquest was held the following day, with the usual

result that no one was incriminated, the verdict being that Mr. Blake and his servant had been "murdered by some person or persons unknown."

In connection with this journey one incident occurred which annoyed me very much. A local Roman Catholic clergyman, the Rev. Father Egan, notorious for his connection with the agitation against the Marquis of Clanricarde (whose agent Mr. Blake was) and Sir Henry Burke and Mr. Lewis, two other landlords in the same district, forwarded by telegraph a communication to the journal which I represented. That communication of about thirty lines, in which the writer reflected in anything but becoming terms on the character of the deceased gentleman, was added to my despatch without anything to indicate that it was not from the same writer. Next morning I met the Mr. Blake referred to in the first part of this chapter (afterwards Sir Henry A. Blake, Governor of the Bahamas and of Newfoundland and Hong Kong, but at this time one of the five Divisional Commissioners for Ireland), and with him the district inspector of police, with both of whom I had long been on terms of intimacy ; I imagined that there was some feeling of constraint and reserve on their part. The conversation proceeded, and at last I found them talking to me about a portion of what was presumably my despatch, but with which I was totally unacquainted. I was puzzled for a time as I had not seen a copy of the paper, but it soon became apparent that something had appeared as part of my despatch

which had not been written by me. This was a very unusual course for a sub-editor to adopt; for although as long as journalism is conducted on the anonymous system, the editor or it may be the proprietor of the newspaper is the person responsible to the public for what appears in its columns, the writer being responsible only to his employer; yet when a representative of a newspaper is sent on a mission such as I was entrusted with on this occasion, his identity necessarily becomes known, all the more so in my case because I was well known in Loughrea, and, to a limited circle—to those from whom he has been acquiring information for example—he is looked upon as the responsible individual. Happily on this occasion the tone of my despatch was quite different from that of the paragraph supplied by Father Egan, and I was altogether relieved in my mind when Mr. Blake and the district inspector informed me that they were thoroughly aware—the conversation took place in the Post Office—that the paragraph in question had not been sent by me, but by Father Egan.

The inquest was held the same day, the 30th of June, and, as the morning paper which I represented had connected with it an evening paper, I sent by telegraph a verbatim report of the proceedings as they went on, and the whole appeared in the issue of that evening. At the close of that despatch I made a reference to the special train. The Editor, however, cut out that part and told me he did so because it would

have been a "tip" to the other papers to follow the example some other time, a view from which I dissented. As a matter of fact there has not been a special newspaper train in Ireland since.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Maamtrasna Tragedy.

Late in the afternoon of Friday, the 19th of August, 1882, the news was received in Dublin that a terrible tragedy had occurred in a remote part of the County of Galway. The report was to the effect that a whole family of five persons had been murdered, and the inference was at once drawn, in accordance with the too well-founded tendency of the time, that the outrage was agrarian ; that it had its origin in the Land question. Strange to say the real cause of the Maamtrasna massacre has never been very clearly made public. There may be those to whom the secret is known, but if so they have kept it with great tenacity. The most reasonable and the most generally accepted solution was that Joyce, who, together with nearly all the inmates of his humble cabin met their doom on the before-mentioned night, was suspected of having given, or being about to give information to the authorities relative to one or more of the many agrarian murders committed within a short radius of the wilds of Maam-

trasna. But with that question, or even with the details of the tragedy itself, we are now but incidentally concerned. My object is rather to narrate the incidents of the somewhat remarkable journey which the writer, in company with two other Dublin journalists, undertook in order to furnish the public with the details of the midnight attack on Joyce's house, and the indiscriminate and deliberate slaughter of its inmates. I have said that the news was received in Dublin in the afternoon of Friday, too late, therefore, to allow of anyone starting by the one o'clock train to Galway. The departure was, therefore, necessarily delayed until the night mail train, at half-past seven o'clock. There was no pre-concerted arrangement, but that a representative of each of the other two Dublin journals would turn up at the Broadstone terminus was with me a foregone conclusion. Accordingly I found on my arrival two brother journalists already on the platform, bound, as we each concluded the moment we met, on the same mission. Happily the weather was fine, and this was something to be thankful for, in view of a journey of the extent and character of which, experienced travellers though we all were, we were in comparative ignorance. We were not sure even that we were right in going to Galway, and, as we afterwards discovered, we would have reached our destination more quickly by going to Claremorris, on the Mayo branch line, and thence by Ballinrobe to Cong. But the most trustworthy information we could obtain,

namely, that Maamtrasna was in the Maam district, made us determine to give the preference to Galway, which we knew to be the nearest railway station to Maam, the distance being, however, twenty-six miles. Galway was reached at one in the morning and, after a hearty supper at the mail car office, we started by the Clifden mail car at two o'clock, knowing that we should probably find little difficulty in hiring a special car at Oughterard, about half way to Maam, and where, as our route diverged from that of the mail car, it would no longer be available. Oughterard was reached at four in the morning, and a car with a good horse between the shafts was got in readiness in about three-quarters of an hour. Two hours of a pleasant drive in the clear, fresh air of an August morning brought us to Maam hotel, famous for the circumstance that the landlord, the late Earl of Leitrim, "boycotted"—the word had not then been coined—the then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (Lord Carlisle) by engaging for his (Lord Leitrim's) servants and others the entire accommodation of the little inn, thus compelling Lord Carlisle to proceed thirteen miles farther to Cong, where he was accommodated so much to his satisfaction that he recorded his sense of the favour in writing, over his autograph. The document which has been carefully framed is still, with pardonable pride, exhibited over the mantel-piece of the principal room in the hotel. We were more fortunate than the Earl of Carlisle. There was no longer a Lord Leitrim—he had been murdered three

years before, and neither myself nor either of my companions, so far as we knew, were obnoxious in the district, and, even if we had been, nobody knew in advance of our coming. While breakfast was being got ready we lounged, one on a sofa and the others on chairs ; all were inclined to sleep, but well aware that although it was only Saturday morning, and the next issue of our respective journals would be on Monday morning, we had no time to lose. We were therefore again on our way in less than two hours. We learned at Maam that we were still ten or twelve miles from the scene of the massacre, and that it was doubtful whether we should be able to take our car within miles of the place. Had we indeed been able to pierce the high mountain (at the foot of which nestles the Maam hotel, affording an outlook on some of the grandest mountain scenery in Connemara) and in addition been able to command a boat at the other end of our imaginary tunnel, we should, by rowing across Lough-na-Fuohy, have reduced the distance by at least one-half. As it was there was nothing for it but to proceed by road. Four miles driving in a westerly direction, towards Leenane, brought us to the mountain road or pass, at the western end of the Maamtrasna mountain range. Traversing rising ground in the opposite or easterly direction for a distance of between two and three miles we came suddenly upon one of the finest views in Connemara, but one which, owing to difficulty of access and the badness of the roads, was

then quite unknown to tourists. Here the lake already mentioned bursts suddenly into view ; it is about four miles in length, with an average breadth of about a mile. On the right-hand side of the lake—our course was now due eastward—there rose abruptly and precipitously the northern side of the high mountain to which I have already referred, while on the left shore the land rose very gradually, but still sufficient to shut out all view of any considerable extent of country save along the shores of Lough-na-Fuohy, at a short distance from which, and almost fringing its waters, ran the mountain road which we still cherished the hope might prove not impassable. A steep winding descent brought us to a level with a bridge spanning a river which flows into Lough-na-Fuohy at its western end, and which is its principle (visible) source of supply. The rest of our way lay along the northern shore of the lake to its eastern extremity, where its waters force their way through a narrow channel to a "spur" or inlet of Lough Mask, at a point only a short distance from the scene of an earlier outrage—that known as the Lough Mask Tragedy, in which two men named Huddy, bailiffs of Lord Ardilaun, were murdered. The first brook we came to presented a difficulty ; it was spanned by a wooden bridge, portion of the flooring timber of which had become decayed, leaving ugly gaps past which it would have been impossible to take a horse and car with safety. The difficulty was got over by unyoking the horse and leading him through the river, while one

of our number caught hold of the shafts of the car and piloted it safely across the broken bridge. The next bridge, or rather gullet, to which we came was partially broken down, and while our horse might have forded the brook our car would have to be carried over, or we should have to perform the remainder of the journey on foot. We hailed some of the peasantry of the district, but they were not men of strong physique, and all their efforts to lift the car, to say nothing of bearing it across the narrow bridge, proved a failure. There was nothing for it but to leave our horse and car here and do the rest of the journey, three miles over a bad road, on foot. It was nearly one o'clock in the afternoon when at last we reached the scene of the tragedy. Picturesque indeed were the surroundings ; to the left was another inlet or " spur " of Lough Mask with the great body of that fine sheet of water immediately beyond, while taking a little to the right and climbing to the ridge of the mountain, an easy ascent of a couple of hundred yards, the spectator, while obtaining a still finer view of Lough Mask and of the inlet to his left, looking eastward, has on his right the other inlet of Lough Mask into which Lough-na-Fuohy empties its waters, and turning his gaze westward he has underneath him the placid waters of Lough-na-Fuohy itself.

The peasantry to the number of about two hundred were gathered on the hill-side, in close proximity to the house in which still lay the bodies of the murdered family—first of all John Joyce, stark-naked, face

downwards on the earthen floor, close to the bed in which he had been sleeping with his wife, the mark of the fatal bullet which had entered his back very plainly visible; then the other four victims in the beds which they had occupied when they were massacred, while young Joyce, who had only been wounded and who eventually recovered, lay in a corner with the coarsest of bed-covering thrown over him. A short time sufficed to pick up the particulars of the tragedy, so far as they could then be procured; but as the coroner was expected we waited until he arrived, which he did at three o'clock. The inquest was held in the open air, close to the house, and while it was proceeding the young lad, the sole survivor of the massacre, was carefully carried out and placed, for better air, in an outhouse adjoining. At five o'clock we commenced our return journey to Maam, and this we performed in much the same manner as the outward one. Maam hotel was reached at eight o'clock, and an hour later we had finished our dinner. We had now been travelling for twenty-six hours, and had been without sleep for thirty-six hours, but our journeyings were not yet at an end. There was no telegraph station nearer than Cong, and we had arranged to telegraph our despatches from that place, the Post Office having sent a Wheatstone instrument to that remote part of the country. We might have slept in Maam and driven to Cong, thirteen miles distant, on Sunday morning, but we knew we had before us a heavy day's work; two of us

represented more than one journal, and had to write, therefore, more than one account of the occurrence, and we concluded that it would not be prudent to break in upon the Sunday with a journey of thirteen miles.

We resolved, accordingly, to proceed to Cong on Saturday night. We asked the hotel-keeper to provide us with a fresh horse and car, but he made sundry excuses which we, perhaps unjustly, regarded as subterfuges, and at last he distinctly refused. There was no alternative but to get the horse and car which we had hired at Oughterard at four o'clock that morning, and which had been with us all the time, to take us on to Cong. The driver was very unwilling, but we agreed to pay him liberally, and at last he consented. We started about half-past nine on what proved to be one of the dreariest and most uncomfortable of the many journeys I have made. It was August, but late at night; consequently it was dark; we had not slept, as I have said, for over thirty-six hours, and under all the circumstances it was not surprising that some of us soon felt cold and drowsy. My confreres, who were firm believers in the efficacy of Irish whiskey as a defence against cold, had fortified themselves in due moderation before leaving the hotel; I, though not a teetotaller, had no faith whatever in intoxicating liquor as an aid in resisting cold or in bearing fatigue, and I acted in accordance with my belief. The result on this occasion again justified my faith; we had gone but a short distance when my companions began to complain of

the cold, while, although I felt drowsy, the cold did not trouble me. Sleepiness was indeed our great difficulty. It is scarcely necessary to point out how dangerous, under such circumstances, it is to travel on an Irish jaunting car. If the wheel of the car should get into a rut of even moderate depth the drowsy passenger would almost inevitably fall off; we all realised the danger and each seemed more anxious for the safety of his companions than of himself. We pinched one another at short intervals, and thus the journey, necessarily accomplished at a slow pace with a jaded horse, was completed without any accident. Cong was reached about one in the morning, and never did weary travellers more thankfully lay their heads on a pillow.

I have told how we got to Maamtrasna. It would occupy too much space to tell how, having written our despatches on Sunday, beginning as early as ten o'clock, we watched with anxiety their transmission by the Wheatstone instrument, fearful lest a breakdown should occur, and that our despatches would not arrive in time for publication. Our fears unhappily did not prove groundless, for while the last minute for taking copy in Dublin was three in the morning we were still in the Post Office an hour later looking at the tape passing through the Wheatstone. The result was that all despatches appeared in a more or less incomplete form in Monday morning's issue of the papers which we respectively represented.

Two days later we visited the scene of the murder again, but on this occasion we travelled by car to Clonbur, and thence by boat, rowed by two stalwart peasants, up the southern inlet of Lough Mask to Finny, where we landed ; thence we had a stiff walk of several miles, including the crossing of the mountain ridge. This journey was undertaken for the purpose of being present at the adjourned inquest, but in the meantime we had obtained from the Constabulary officers the details of the midnight journey of the intending murderers across the wild country from Derrypark to Maamtrasna, and had forwarded an account of it to our respective newspapers. The adjourned inquest was of a formal character, and we contented ourselves with getting some details relative to the burial of the victims of the outrage, and then started on our return to Dublin.

CHAPTER XVII.

Lord Spencer's Visit to Maamtrasna.

A few weeks after the Joyce massacre at Maamtrasna, namely, about the end of September, 1882, it was my lot to accompany Lord Spencer on a visit to the scene of the appalling tragedy. I did not know the programme of the intended visit when I started; it only unfolded itself by degrees. It proved, however, to be perhaps the most fatiguing journey, or rather series of journeys, that I had ever experienced, and these were not a few. In company with the representative of another Dublin newspaper I left by the morning train from the Broadstone terminus of the Midland Great Western Railway for the West of Ireland. All further information as to our destination might as well have been contained in sealed orders. Lord Spencer and his suite joined the train at Blanchardstown, the nearest station to Dublin, and quite as near as Broadstone to the Viceregal Lodge, while the route is much pleasanter, as it avoids the drive through the city. So far as I remember it was not considered necessary

to send a pilot engine in advance, but, as was then the habit, police were stationed at short distances along the line, as a precaution against any outrage that might be attempted; Mr. Ward, the traffic manager, accompanied the train. Only the most vague idea of the intended route of his Excellency had been conveyed to the Press, and we were some time on our way before we learned that the train journey was to end at Ballaghderrin—I spell the word as it appears on the railway station, although Ballagh-a-derreen is the traditional spelling; the local pronunciation, however, favours the orthography used by the railway officials. I should add, at the same time, that as a rule the word is pronounced as though it were spelt "Balla," whilst the village (about ten miles away) which is actually spelt "Balla" is pronounced "Bal" probably due to a desire not to confound the one place with the other.

There was, it need scarcely be said, no demonstration at Ballaghderrin on the Viceroy's arrival. The feeling towards Lord Spencer was not friendly; but it was understood that the Viceroy was on this occasion visiting the West to "see it for himself," and, being a guest, the old chivalrous feeling was manifested towards one who was coming in that capacity—a feeling which, despite the cry of "Ireland for the Irish," has not yet altogether died out in the country. It may be objected that on this occasion, as on others, the Viceroy, while nominally "seeing the country for himself," was in

reality seeing it though the spectacles of officials. But it will scarcely be seriously contended that a man like Lord Spencer, of great ability and experience, who had held the highest office in the country for a number of years, and who, withal, was a shrewd observer of men and things and an independent thinker, was as likely to be misled by officialism, as the hundred and one English visitors who, during the immediately preceding few years had poured into Ireland and, putting themselves under the exclusive guidance of members of one party, had gone back "full of accurate information as to the real state of things in Ireland." I met many of these English visitors, and I rarely came across one who sought information except on one side; although I met a few who were courteous enough to listen to the other side, if chance gave them an opportunity.

Lord Spencer and his party made little or no delay in Ballaghderrin, and, with a very unusual want of forethought, we pressmen had neglected to wire in advance for a conveyance. This proved to be under the circumstances a very serious omission, and the source of a great deal of subsequent trouble and hardship. We learned before leaving the train that a "special" would convey His Excellency from Foxford to Westport, leaving Foxford about half-past six or seven in the evening, and we were also informed that we might travel by that train. The unavoidable delay in getting a car at Ballaghderrin, however, precluded

us eventually from availing ourselves of the privilege. The better part of an hour elapsed before we started, and there was the further obstacle in view that while we (including the driver) numbered four on a car, the Viceroy with his suite and escort were on horseback. We followed in His Excellency's track, passing through Charlestown and on to Swinford. We made such inquiries as were necessary at Charlestown and at Swinford, where we arrived just after Lord Spencer had left. While a fresh horse and car were being got ready we took a hurried "snack," and we also pursued inquiries as to His Excellency's proceedings in Swinford; we learned amongst other things that he had had an interview with Mr. Vere Foster, the well-known educationalist, since dead, and also with a local merchant who, if I remember rightly, was also a pawnbroker, the chief subjects discussed being, in both instances, the general condition of the people and the policy of promoting emigration. With the least possible delay, for by this time we were beginning to be very apprehensive that we would not reach Foxford in time to catch the special to Westport, and there was no train before the night mail, which would land us in Westport at three in the morning, we took leave of Swinford. Foxford was not reached until half-past seven o'clock; we had little hope that we should find the special train waiting for us, but although the station was nearly a mile on the other side of the town we drove direct to it, only to find, however, that the train had

left half an hour before. Our next look-out was as to telegraphing facilities. We had arranged to telegraph our despatches from Westport, but there was now every prospect that it would be the small hours of the morning before we could accomplish the journey—about twenty Irish miles. We accordingly wired from Foxford requesting the office at Castlebar to be kept open, and then we set to work and wrote part of our despatches while the first substantial meal we had during the entire day was being prepared. Castlebar was reached shortly before midnight, and having completed our despatches we handed them to the postmaster, and, with a fresh horse, the fourth since morning, started shortly after midnight on the last stage of our journey, eleven miles, reaching Westport shortly after two in the morning.

It was necessary to be up betimes, for we had learned that Lord Spencer would make an early start, and that his destination was Leenane, at the head of the extremely picturesque Killery Bay, one of the most lovely pieces of mountain and lake scenery —for the bay has the appearance of a land-locked lake—to be found even in Connemara. We had brought upon ourselves no small amount of annoyance and a great deal of fatigue the previous day by falling to the rear of the Viceregal party, and this morning we determined to avoid that. We gave orders accordingly to have our car ready at the same time as the horses were to be brought out for the Viceroy and his party and escort of

Hussars. We started a minute or two after they left the hotel and proceeded to leave the town by a different and somewhat shorter route. We too readily took for granted that the Viceregal party were ahead of us, and we accordingly urged the driver to take the most out of his horse. By the time we got a couple of miles out of the town we began to think that, as on the preceding day, we were again going to be "a day after the fair." We somewhat unaccountably made no inquiries until we had gone about three or four miles, and then all the information obtainable was of a negative character, nobody had seen the Viceregal cavalcade. Speculation was rife as to whether after all we had not been out-witted, and whether His Excellency might not have gone in another direction, or at all events have taken another route; our knowledge of the district was against the latter supposition. We resolved, therefore, to push on, but at a somewhat slower pace, still a little uncertain whether we were in front or in rear. At last we came to a police barracks, about six or eight miles from the starting point, and here we were enabled to ascertain definitely that Lord Spencer was to pass that way and that he had not yet done so. We resumed our journey in better humour, and resolved to get well on towards Leenane, if possible, before we should be overtaken. About a mile and a half outside the village, and just at the boundary between the Counties of Mayo and Galway, we met Mr. Clifford Lloyd, R.M. Mr.

Lloyd was at the head of a considerable body of mounted Constabulary intended as a guard of honour, and perhaps as an additional body-guard as well. We halted in the vicinity for the purpose of witnessing the reception accorded to His Excellency. When the Viceregal party came in sight a huge bonfire was lit on the side of the road, and the peasantry who had assembled in moderate numbers gave a cordial cheer, which the representative of Her Majesty graciously acknowledged. Arrived at Leenane hotel an address was read and in reply Lord Spencer made a speech of some length, a circumstance which was a perfect God-send to us, as we had, up to that time, little or no material for a despatch. We dined comfortably at the hotel, and without a moment's unnecessary delay set out on our return journey to Westport, the nearest town from which we could get our despatches telegraphed. We arrived about ten o'clock at night, and having finished our despatches and taken a hurried supper set out again about midnight, this time in a four-wheeled vehicle with two horses, for Leenane, which we reached about three in the morning.

To go to bed at four in the morning and get up at eight is not a desirable preliminary to a hard day's work; that, however, was what we had to do on the morning after Lord Spencer's arrival at Leenane. As well as I can remember we were called, by direction, sometime before eight o'clock, for the exact hour at which His Excellency would start was uncertain,

and we had had experience enough of the difficulty of keeping an eye on Lord Spencer to make us particularly watchful; not that there was any disposition to keep us from being informed of his intended movements, but these appeared not to be decided upon until almost the last moment. Lord Spencer and party who had slept on board a gunboat anchored in Killery Bay, came ashore about ten o'clock, and a very short time sufficed to get the cavalcade in motion.

While Lord Spencer was standing at the door of the hotel, before the escort came on the scene, he was interviewed by the representative of *The New York World*, Mr. Balch, whom we met in the company of Mr. R. J. Kelly, proprietor of *The Tuam Herald*. The interview was brief and was rather a "stolen" one than one of the stereotyped character in which the person interviewed knows that what he says is intended to be published, and that, not unfrequently, after revision by himself. On this occasion there were no such preliminaries, and probably Lord Spencer was quite unaware that the conversation into which he was lured was carefully noted mentally, and was the same evening cabled to New York. There was not much of interest in the interview, which lasted only a few minutes, and which related to His Excellency's visit to the United States and the probability of a second one.

The escort, consisting of a troop of Hussars and a number of mounted police, having been got in order the

party set out in the first instance for Maam. Here a halt was made, and Lord Spencer and his suite lunched in the hotel, and of course we utilised the time in similar fashion.

The delay in lunching was taken advantage of to replace a shoe which one of the horses of the Hussars had cast. There was some difficulty about this, as there was no forge at the place, and no farrier was available. Our friend of *The New York World*, however, had roughed it a little in his own country and undertook to do what was required; he was about to commence work when an expert arrived, and our friend's reputation was, perhaps, saved. He got all the credit of being a "handy man" without the risk attending the test being actually applied. On remounting—the only persons not on horseback were the three Pressmen—we retraced our steps for a couple of miles and then struck across the mountain, the route taken being the same as I had traversed when first visiting Maamtrasna a few weeks before. Now, however, the journey was more easily accomplished; the bridges, or culverts, which on the earlier visit had been in such a dilapidated condition as to be quite impassable with a horse and car had been repaired, and we were able to follow the equestrian party without difficulty. We kept so close to them indeed that, when we were starting on our way back to Leenane, Lord Spencer complimented us on the manner in which we had succeeded in keeping up with him.

At Maamtrasna Lord Spencer visited the house that had been occupied by the Joyce family, and which was now empty; he also visited the nearest house, about fifty yards distant, and entered into conversation with the occupiers as to whether they had, on the night of the tragedy, heard any noise or any report of fire-arms; they replied in the negative. Amongst those who were in waiting at Maamtrasna for His Excellency was Mr. George Bolton, then Crown Solicitor, who was making inquiries into the circumstances of the murders, and who afterwards successfully conducted the prosecution of the murderers in Dublin.

Before leaving Maam about mid-day it had become obvious that the utmost despatch would have to be used if we were to get any account of the day's proceedings written in time for next morning's papers. We foresaw that we should probably reach Leenane a very little time before the shades of evening commenced to fall, and this suggested the pleasant prospect of getting into Westport about midnight with our despatches still unwritten. I had on one or two occasions before this—one being the occasion of the visit of Miss Anna Parnell to Tulla, Co. Clare—tried, and with some success, the experiment of writing while seated on an outside car; the attempt was due to an accident more than anything else. On the occasion referred to, a Sunday afternoon, when still more than a mile from Tulla on the road leading from Ennis, I found myself blocked in the rere of the procession which was slowly

wending its way to the village to do honour to the sister of Mr. Parnell. I had just been asked by *The Daily News* to write one or two special letters on the condition of Ireland. The telegram to this effect had been addressed to Dublin and had been re-transmitted (in accordance with my standing orders) to Ennis, my head-quarters for the time being.

Under the circumstances I began to fret at the loss of time entailed in following the slow procession ; I took out my note-book and began to write, and found I could do so without difficulty. When Miss Parnell's meeting was over I set out on my return to Ennis, and having succeeded so well while the horse travelled at a walking pace, I resolved to try the experiment of writing while the horse travelled at the ordinary pace of an Irish jaunting car. I was more than satisfied with the result, for by the time I reached Ennis I had a column of a special letter written, and sufficiently legible, to permit of its being handed in at once to the telegraph clerk.

The success of this experiment suggested the adoption of a similar one on this journey and on others already mentioned. The representative of the other Dublin journal who accompanied me followed my example. We were both much facilitated by our friend of *The New York World* who kindly lent us broad pads, which made it more easy to write, especially on a mountain road such as that along which our course lay, and the inequalities of which not only increased the difficulty of writing, but increased materially the risk of falling

off the car which must ever attend all such attempts. The result of our efforts was, that by the time we got back to Leenane at six o'clock in the evening, we each had a column of our despatch written.

But we still had an eighteen mile journey before us, the distance we had travelled since morning being about twenty-five miles. Our despatches could only be telegraphed from Westport, and it would be necessary after we had accomplished that to return during the night to Leenane. Had our despatches been completed we might have sent them on by our wagonette; but we had still a good deal to write, and it was necessary that what we had written should be put on the wire with as little delay as possible. Dinner was managed in a fashion which was rather original, and possibly unique. While one of us looked after the "traps" and another superintended the getting out of the horses, a third, our New York friend, went into the kitchen and "requisitioned" the establishment in very effective style. He got a large bottle which he filled with excellent hot soup; then, seeing a huge pie, which turned out to be rabbit, he took possession of that also. Arming himself with a large cup and knives and forks he brought out the whole to the wagonette. The horses were rapidly "put to," and in a few minutes, while it was yet daylight, we were dashing along in the two-horse wagonette in which we had travelled the preceding day from Westport. Having cleared the village we attacked the soup,

drinking it as "cleanly" as we could in the jolting vehicle; the pie followed, and with it we consumed a bottle of sherry which had also been requisitioned.

Westport was reached about ten o'clock. We ordered supper at Gibbon's hotel, and then proceeded to the telegraph office, and having handed in our despatches as far as they were ready, resumed writing, and completed all before midnight, the hour for which we had ordered supper; we had also ordered a closed carriage to be in readiness to take us back to Leenane, with very distinct directions that the horses should be "fresh" ones. The closed carriage was ordered with a view to a "snooze" on the way, but it had not the desired effect. First of all the atmosphere was too close to be pleasant, and when an attempt was made to lower one of the windows it was found to be immoveable save in an upward direction, up through the top of the door, and up through the top of the door we accordingly pushed it; but sleep would not be wooed. What was still worse, the horses were a *different* pair, no doubt, to those which had brought us from Leenane, but they were certainly not "fresh." The driver eventually informed us that they had been out all day. The result was that although we left Westport half an hour after midnight, and although it was of the utmost moment that we should get back to Leenane in time to snatch an hour or two of sleep before the time for starting next day, we did not reach there until five in the morning. We went to bed but not to sleep. I was

too fatigued to close my eyes, and at seven o'clock I thought it as well to get up. Breakfast with strong tea roused us a bit, and while we were still enjoying it there entered the room, three days "after the fair," the representative of the third Dublin morning paper. We congratulated him on the vigilance and enterprise of the journal which he represented, and informed him that Lord Spencer was about to drive to Kylemore to visit Mr. Mitchell Henry's place, and then to embark on board the gunboat and sail round the coast to Galway harbour and that our next glimpse of him would be on Galway pier on Saturday afternoon; it was now Friday morning. The newcomer had travelled all night by the mail train from Dublin to Galway, and thence by car to Leenane, and there was now before him, in common with ourselves, the prospect of a drive of fifty-eight Irish miles. It was not an exhilarating prospect, but there was no help for it.

Before starting the Honorable Robert Spencer, M.P., who formed one of the Viceroy's party, read out to the company (military and police officers and representatives of the Press) a lengthy telegram, which had been transmitted from London, giving an account of the victory of Tel-el-Kebir.

We accompanied the Viceregal party as far as Kylemore, visited the memorial church erected by Mr. Mitchell Henry to the memory of his wife, and then, parting company, we drove on through Letterfrack, the scene of two agrarian murders—of Lyden

and his son and also of Constable Kavanagh, while the latter was engaged in inquiring into their assassination—arriving at Clifden in time to dine before the departure of the " long car " for Galway at four o'clock. The memory of that drive will long remain with me. We were doing the last stage of an almost continuous journey by road of two hundred and twenty miles, during which period we had only had nine hours sleep. It was almost impossible to keep our eyes open ; each was anxious for the other's safety, and now and again, if he saw his neighbour nodding, would give him a shake to rouse him ; his neighbour would by-and-bye return the kindly office, and the long and fatiguing journey was at length completed in safety.

There was nothing remarkable in the proceedings at Galway on the following day ; that is, nothing of a character to require a place in these reminiscences. We kept our bed until ten o'clock, and I never felt more profoundly thankful at the close of a journey than I did when we all reached the Broadstone terminus safely at ten o'clock on Saturday night.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Third Visit to Maamtrasna.

I had to pay yet another visit to Maamtrasna. The trials were over; three of the accused, one an elderly man named Myles Joyce, being convicted and sentenced to death, and had been executed, all in a row and by one pull of the lever, inside Galway Jail. I was present at the execution, and any facts stated here are altogether from personal observation. Two of the men implicated in the crime (Casey and Philben) had given evidence for the Crown, and it was largely upon their evidence that the conviction was obtained. After the men were hanged an agitation was got up by a number of the sympathisers with lawlessness, who are always to the fore in parts of Ireland; it was based on an impugnment of the sufficiency of the evidence upon which Myles Joyce was convicted. The other two men who were hanged had confessed their guilt.

Advantage was taken of the fact that Myles Joyce protested his innocence to the last; and also of the fact that the two men who were hanged along with him

made a declaration in prison implying that Joyce was innocent, which, however, probably only meant that he was not one of the actual perpetrators of the crime. In consequence of all this, the telegraph office at Galway was kept open, by direction of the Irish Executive, for the entire night preceding the triple execution, and the doubts thus raised were sought to be intensified by the circumstance that when Marwood drew the bolt, the dangling rope caught in the arm of Myles Joyce and so interfered with the result aimed at by the executioner that the latter had to catch hold of the unhappy man's legs and drag them to complete his grim task. Then came stories, assiduously circulated by the Nationalist Press, of the appearance and re-appearance of the ghost of Myles Joyce in the neighbourhood of Galway Jail. The whole matter was the subject of heated discussions in Parliament, mixed up at the same time with discussions on the Barbavilla case—a charge of conspiracy to murder Mr. Barlow Smythe, the result of which was an attempt to murder that gentleman and the actual murder of his sister-in-law, Mrs. Henry Smythe, who was seated with him in the carriage into which the shots were fired.

The class of people called "Informers" have never been popular in Ireland, and the word has been applied almost indiscriminately to all descriptions of Crown witnesses. It was not necessary, and it is still unnecessary in Ireland that a witness should be an approver, that is, a man who has taken part in a crime

and has, in order to save his skin, become a Crown witness, to entitle him to be called an Informer. A Crown witness in any case which sympathisers with the criminals choose to call a "political" case earns the title of Informer, and the witness is held up to the hatred and detestation of the people. In the case of Casey and Philben, with whom the present narrative is concerned, the two witnesses had become approvers, with the result that when they went back to their homes in the Maamtrasna district they were shunned by their neighbours and were obliged to have police protection, their lives being rendered anything but happy.

The report of the recantation of these men, their "repentance" as it was called, was published in *United Ireland*. It was stated that they had gone to a visitation or confirmation service, I forget which, at Clonbur, and had there openly confessed to Archbishop M'Evilly, in the presence of the whole congregation, that their statements made upon oath at the trial were to a certain extent false; false in so far as they incriminated Myles Joyce, and false also with regard to one or two of the men who, on pleading guilty, had been sentenced to penal servitude, it being believed that they had not taken part in the actual perpetration of the murders. On the publication of this paragraph I was despatched the same evening from Dublin, in order to interview Casey and Philben. I spent the short interval between the time I received orders and the departure of the night mail train in looking up the newspapers con-

taining the report of the trial, and the narrative of the circumstances of the execution. I took a hurried note of the material points, went home and dined and finally started by the night mail train from Broadstone for Claremorris. I utilised the time occupied by the journey between Dublin and Mullingar in putting together, in readable form, the notes regarding the trial and execution which I had made in the afternoon. This I put into an envelope, which I dropped into the railway platform postal pillar, in time for the night mail to Dublin, thus, as I thought, securing its delivery on Sunday morning. But "the best laid schemes," &c. I had not put sufficient value in stamps on the envelope, a matter about which, seeing that no more were available, I did not trouble myself, as I never for a moment dreamt that the fact of the postage being insufficiently paid would, in the case of the journal to which I was attached, cause any delay in the delivery. But the next day was Sunday and the letter was refused by the caretaker. There was a "row in the building" when the fact was ascertained on Monday. But in the meantime my design of publishing these notes simultaneously with the interview, and as part of my despatch, was effectually frustrated.

Claremorris was reached at half-past one in the morning; it was a "toss-up" whether I should go right through to Ballinrobe or sleep in Claremorris and proceed to Ballinrobe next morning. I eventually decided on adopting the latter course, and before going

to bed I ordered a car to be in readiness by eight o'clock; Ballinrobe, which is fourteen miles from Claremorris, being, as I was aware, a considerable distance from my ultimate destination. It was raining heavily when, between ten and eleven o'clock on Sunday, I reached Ballinrobe. The inquiries which I instituted resulted in the information that Father Corbett, the parish priest of Partry—memorable as the parish in which, twenty or five and twenty years before, there resided another Roman Catholic clergyman who made some noise in his day (Father Lavelle)—would not be at home until three or four o'clock in the afternoon. Anxious though I was to push on, I concluded that, under the circumstances, it was useless to do so with too much energy; and this view commended itself the more as the rain was still coming down heavily. Patience was rewarded in the latter regard, and shortly after two o'clock I started by the horse and car which had brought me that morning from Claremorris. When we had got a couple of miles out of the town the driver disclosed his uncertainty as to whether he had taken the right road to Partry; inquiry proved that his doubt was well founded, and we had to return to the town and proceed anew by a different road. The drive was along the northern shore of Lough Mask, and when, at a later period of the evening, I reached my destination, I found that between this journey and my former trips round the eastern, southern and western shores of the Lough, I had completed a circuit of this very

considerable sheet of water in the centre of a very mountainous and not easily accessible district.

The distance to Partry was only some half dozen Irish miles, and when I reached Father Corbett's house I found that he had just returned from the very district "back in the mountains" where Casey and Philben lived. He was about to dine and, with the customary hospitality, invited me to join him. I should guard myself by saying that by "customary hospitality" I do not mean that it is only when an Irish priest is about to dine himself that he will ask a visitor to accept hospitality; on the contrary, I have invariably experienced the most cordial hospitality from Irish priests, even when they were well aware that my own political views, as well perhaps as the views of the journal which I might represent at the time, were not in harmony with their own. On the present occasion the matter was somewhat mixed. I had met Father Corbett frequently before and had had long conversations with him, in which, while he knew that I was at the time representing a journal of particular views, I had given free expression to my own individual views, which, on all subjects, and especially on the question of partisan government, were those of a free lance. I expressed contempt for all political parties, and a deeply rooted belief that, whatever inconvenience might result from it for the moment, the substitution of *any* system for the present system of government by party must be an improvement. Father Corbett was

therefore by this time thoroughly acquainted with my general views; but he had, I hope I may say, confidence in my honesty of purpose, however much I might differ from him on political questions. There was still a distance of eight or nine miles to be travelled before reaching the district in which Casey and Philben resided, and the best method of covering the distance was discussed during dinner, over which little time was spent, as it was now after four o'clock and I had made but little progress towards the attainment of my object. I had realised by this time that my Claremorris horse would not be fit to do the remainder of the journey and return with anything like comfortable speed to Ballinrobe, so as to permit my telegraphing that night the result of my inquiries. Father Corbett kindly volunteered to convey me by his own horse and car, an offer of which I readily availed myself, and which moreover set me free to let my tired horse go back at once to Ballinrobe, the driver at the same time taking a message for a fresh horse and car to meet me at Partry on my return.

I had by this time realised that the utmost despatch in travelling would be necessary. Father Corbett, as he disclosed to me on the journey, put a saddle and bridle into the well of the car and we started. The reverend gentleman was his own driver on this occasion, and he did not spare the whip. The pace was rapid, all the more so, perhaps, because before we had gone far the rain again came down in torrents. It cleared off,

however, as we neared Tourmakeady, a picturesque village near the spot for which we were bound. By this time Father Corbett had informed me that we should have to do part of the journey on horseback; and not only so, but that our route lay across country. I had not set my foot in a stirrup for over twenty years; but still I flattered myself that, on a level road, I should be able to keep my seat, though perhaps not in a very graceful fashion. I was taken somewhat aback when I learned that the riding was not only to be across country, but across a mountainous country, a kind of riding exercise to which, even in my youthful days, I had never been accustomed. As we drew near to the point beyond which a wheeled vehicle could be of no use Father Corbett hailed a passing countryman, and asked him to take a short cut across the mountains to Casey's house, and tell him that he (Father Corbett) wanted to see him, and that he would meet him at a particular point. The request was equivalent to a command, and the man immediately disappeared. Another countryman was then hailed, and from him Father Corbett requisitioned a horse and saddle and bridle. Having saddled his own pony, he mounted, while I was helped into the saddle of the farmer's horse. I do not know whether I should be able to ride a steeplechase without more than a moderate amount of risk to my neck, but after the experiences of the ride of that evening, I should no longer have any very unspeakable dread of the pigskin. Fortunately

my horse was fairly well acquainted with mountaineering and did his work well; but I fancy that I myself cut but a sorry figure. Now the path—the way I should say, for there was neither path nor roadway—was up an irregular steep, and again down a steep of equally irregular formation. The "John Gilpin" attitude, or an approach to it, was practicable going up hill, but it was impracticable when the descent came. This was largely the character of the whole journey, although there were intervals of comparatively level ground when I was able to break into a trot. After a ride of about twenty minutes we came in sight of a mountain stream on the other side of which, and coming towards us, was a man whom Father Corbett recognised as Casey. Casey crossed over, and here, about seven o'clock on a July evening, I interviewed the informer, who, according to his own statement, had been instrumental in sending one man wrongfully to the gallows and one or two more to penal servitude who had not earned that distinction. Casey told his story with great readiness, and in considerable detail; the burden of his excuse for the perjury which he said he had committed at the trial being that the Crown Solicitor (Mr. George Bolton) would not accept from him any other story than that which he eventually told in the witness box. When I had exhausted my inquiries of Casey, Father Corbett, who was present throughout the interview, despatched Casey to Philben, to tell him we were coming. Remounting our steeds, our path

was somewhat smoother for part of the way to Philben's. It lay for some time along the bed of the river, and occasionally on the river's bank. Father Corbett exchanged horses with me and I was able, the greater part of the way, to do a fairly smart trot. In about ten or twelve minutes we reached Philben's house. Casey, who, as I have already intimated had met us in the first instance, had subsequently gone on towards Philben's without any police escort, or, at all events, without the escort being visible ; but in the neighbourhood of Philben's house several police constables were to be seen. They kept in view our party, which now consisted of four—Casey, Philben, Father Corbett and myself—but at such a distance that they could not hear any part of the conversation. Philben, unlike Casey (who expressed his readiness, nay his desire, to undergo any punishment that might fall to him if prosecuted for perjury) showed a reluctance to be interviewed. He would say nothing, indeed, on the subject which had led me to visit him until Father Corbett spoke to him in Irish—doubtless making him aware that I knew not a word of that language. Even after he consented to be questioned, however, Philben showed great reticence, and did not appear to be at all so positive regarding the new version of his story, as Casey had shown himself. I soon found that a prolongation of the interview would not lead to my acquiring any further information or explanation of the discrepancy between the

original sworn testimony and the version which both Casey and Philben were now evidently most anxious to gain credence for, so that they might be cleared of what they regarded as the stigma attaching to the name of informer, and thus be enabled to live on more friendly terms with their neighbours. It being now eight o'clock we remounted, and after a little more experience of very steep and very irregular descents, we once more reached the high-road, when, for the first time, I had an opportunity of convincing Father Corbett that on the level ground I was not such a very bad horseman. "Post-haste" had been the word throughout, and no time was lost in attaching Father Corbett's excellent little cob to the car, and commencing the return journey. At Partry there was a fresh horse and car awaiting me and after a few minutes delay I was again *en route* to Ballinrobe, travelling at a rapid pace, and I reached my hotel there about twenty minutes to eleven o'clock. I was much fatigued, I need hardly say, and at one time I had thought of not wiring my despatch that night, but of holding it over until next day and writing it in the train on my way to Dublin. I went so far as to express to Father Corbett, on our way between Maamtrasna and Partry, my intention of adopting this course But immediately afterwards my better Press instinct prevailed, and I said to him—"No ! I will strike while the iron is hot." Accordingly, having ordered supper, I set to work, and by two o'clock in the morning, a

short interval for supper having intervened, I had completed my despatch, and a few minutes later the last page of it was in the office in Dublin.

On the following day I met Archbishop M'Evilly, who happened to be in Ballinrobe, in continuation of his confirmation tour. His Grace told me he had consulted with some of the local clergy, the result being that he penned a letter to Lord Spencer setting forth briefly the new circumstances that had transpired in connection with the case, and respectfully asking His Excellency to institute an inquiry into the matter. The reply to this came in the form of a lengthened statement, setting forth the evidence given at the trial, and pointing out that apart altogether from the testimony of the informers, there was ample proof to establish the guilt of those who had been charged, and to justify the verdict of the jury. So convincing was this statement that on its publication the matter was virtually dropped. Another letter was forwarded to Lord Spencer by Archbishop M'Evilly; but I have reason to think that His Grace was greatly impressed by the case which was made out by the Executive, and that it was felt on all sides that the statement was "as a wall of brass" on which it would be useless to seek to make any impression. That this was the view entertained by all save those who were determined not to be convinced seems certain, from the fact that the agitation on the subject ceased, and that there was no mention afterwards of the Maamstrasna case either in Parliament or in the Press.

CHAPTER XIX.

With Lord Spencer to Belmullet.

In March or April, 1883, it was announced that Earl Spencer would pay a visit to Belmullet, the extreme westward point of the County of Mayo, and forming almost an island, but only in a strictly technical sense, for the island, containing some thousands of acres, is accessible from the main land by a narrow bridge from under which in both directions the water which separates Belmullet from the main land gradually widens and deepens, until it forms part of the Atlantic ocean. The tides flow, in opposite directions, towards the bridge from whence, when the ebb comes, they recede again in opposite directions. The object of Lord Spencer's visit was to witness the departure for Canada of a number of families in the district, who were being assisted to find a new and doubtless much more comfortable home, the assistance being derived partly from the emigration fund philanthropically promoted by Mr. Tuke, and partly from funds voted by Parliament, in opposition to the wishes of the Parnellite party, who

only consented to the grant because one for the formation of light railways was bound up with it. The emigration portion of the grant was administered through the Poor Law Board which also contributed a portion of the expense. The immediate occasion of the visit of the Viceroy to such a remote district—a district, I believe, never before visited by any representative of Her Majesty in Ireland—was, as I have said, the departure of several hundred families by the steamer Furnessia, which was to call at Blacksod Bay and embark the intending emigrants.

We journalists left Dublin on Wednesday morning by the nine o'clock train from Broadstone and arrived at Ballina about four in the afternoon, the period in question being before the institution of the limited mail trains which now cover the distance in a little over five hours. Lord Spencer took up his quarters in the principal hotel. In the course of the evening he paid a visit to the weir on the river Moy, and witnessed the method adopted there for catching salmon. In the morning we were all astir at an early hour; that is to say, the representatives of two of the Dublin papers, and myself, representing the third. The distance to Belmullet was about forty Irish miles, a distance which had to be covered before evening. The Lord Lieutenant who was accompanied by his private secretary Mr. Courtenay Boyle, had arranged to travel on horseback, His Excellency's horses having been forwarded from Dublin the previous day. I was not altogether

unaccustomed to the saddle—and there was one memorable occasion, recorded in the preceding chapter, when I was obliged to resort to it—but it is not the usual mode of travelling for journalists in Ireland; my confreres and I accordingly travelled by the national vehicle, the outside car. It is not an easy matter to get an Irish jarvey, especially if he has three passengers on his car, to drive at riding pace, and in this case moreover it was the pace of an accomplished rider to hounds, and his escort, a troop of Hussars. We kept fairly well up with His Excellency however, and were only a few minutes in the rere at the first town, or rather village on the way—Crossmolina, afterwards the seat of a murder conspiracy, in which P. W. Nally, was implicated, and for taking part in which he and a number of others were sentenced to penal servitude. It need hardly be said that there was no triumphal arch erected in the village, nor was any anxiety evinced to present Lord Spencer with an address of welcome from the inhabitants. After a few minutes delay the journey was resumed, and continued without a halt until about half the distance was traversed. Here the Viceregal party stopped to lunch, and we were not loth to follow their example. We had taken the precaution to bring ample materials with us from the hotel, and seated on the grass by the side of a river we made a hearty mid-day meal. The place at which we halted was close to what is known as the "musical bridge"—the stones of the parapet giving forth

remarkable musical sounds, which, under the manipulation of a skilful musician, could be made to produce the most singular effects. This bridge and its extraordinary peculiarities I afterwards had the fortune to hear described in a lecture delivered in Dublin under the auspices of the Royal Dublin Society. When we had finished lunch we walked to the bridge, and in a few minutes were joined by Lord Spencer, with Mr. Courtenay Boyle and one or two other members of the Viceregal party. His Excellency entered into conversation with us, the musical properties of the stones forming one of the topics.

Horses as well as men having by this time been refreshed and invigorated the journey was resumed. It was a dreary enough drive for the greater part of the way, but at times the effect produced by the equestrian procession—by this time well in front—as it passed through a beautiful valley and close by a winding river, was extremely picturesque. The journey was broken for a few minutes by a visit to a National School, close to the roadside. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, and the children were just being dismissed for the day. Lord Spencer dismounted, and entered into conversation for a few minutes with the teacher, at the close of which the cavalcade again went on its way.

We had fallen somewhat behind by the time we reached Bangor-Erris, a village of two or three houses, one of them being a public house, and we thought it desirable that we should here get a fresh horse and car.

The animal that had brought us thus far, three-fourths of the entire journey, would have been quite able to complete the forty miles, but we realised the difficulty, now staring us in the face, of getting our despatches forwarded to our respective journals. There was no telegraph office nearer than Ballina. It was of course utterly impracticable to send any despatches that night, the most we could do would be to write them, if after the fatigue of the long journey we should be able to do so. But it is the pressman's motto that whatever it is possible to do must be done. Supposing we did write that night it would be necessary that our contributions should reach Ballina early next evening, that is, not later than six o'clock, so as to secure their transmission in good time for the following day's issue. This could only be done by sending a special car, and for this reason it was decided to leave our Ballina car at Bangor-Erris, with instructions to await there the return next morning from Belmullet of the car which we thus engaged at Bangor-Erris.

There was of necessity some delay in making these arrangements, and in getting out our new conveyance ; but with our fresh horse, and a capital roadster it was, we made a rapid run to Belmullet, arriving there not very long after the Viceroy. His Excellency was afterwards rowed out to a gunboat which was in Blacksod Bay, and on board of which it had been arranged he should spend the night. We took up our quarters in the hotel, a comfortable place enough, much more

so than was to be had in some other towns in the West of Ireland less remote and much more pretentious than Belmullet. The demand for accommodation, however, was such that at least one of our party had to sleep on a sofa; but we were as yet a long way from sleep, with even a sofa for a bed. We all felt instinctively that if we did not write our despatches before we sought repose we should never write in time to forward them so as to reach Ballina early the next evening. Having dined, or rather partaken of a high tea, for it was necessary to avoid anything that would tend to induce drowsiness, we at last, about nine o'clock, set to work with our pens. It was up-hill work, however; first, because of the fatigue from which we were all suffering, and secondly, because of the fact that the incidents of the day were few and of little public interest. But there would be an interval of forty-eight hours from the appearance of our preceding despatch, and to be in the wake of a Viceroy and not produce a column and a half in that time would be bad business. The public would never dream of making allowance for the fact that, from the time of the Wednesday night's despatch from Ballina, we had had to sleep for the ordinary period, then to travel for a whole day, and that then our despatches when written had to be carried by road a distance of forty Irish miles before they reached the hands of the telegraph clerk. Cups of coffee had to be resorted to at frequent intervals to stimulate the brain, and in

fact at times to keep us from falling asleep. One of our party did not finish his task until after three in the morning. We went to bed as soon as we had finished, and slept soundly.

We had arranged the previous evening, in perfect good faith and with the full intention of carrying out the arrangement, to leave Belmullet pier at about seven in the morning, in the company of a resident magistrate who had invited us to join him in his visit to the gunboat, to witness the embarkation of the emigrants on the Furnessia ; but human nature has its limits of endurance. We did not get out of bed until nearly nine o'clock, and by the time we had breakfasted it was past ten. There was nothing for it but to drive down the western side of Blacksod Bay, that is, the island side, and get as near to the place of embarkation as possible. Of course we were too late. All the emigrants, mostly family parties, had embarked, the Furnessia, which was well out in the bay, was ready for sea and would sail in a few hours, and although it might have been possible to get a boat, the water was too rough outside to be very tempting to landsmen. We had therefore to content ourselves with such information as we could pick up on the spot, and with a piece of "information" which afterwards served to point many a gibe by members of the Parnellite party in their attacks on Lord Spencer in Parliament. As we were on our outward drive, amongst others whom we met was a District Inspector of Constabulary. We

hailed him, and in reply to questions he informed us that the emigrants had all embarked; he said that the Lord Lieutenant evinced the greatest interest in the poor people, and added that he had heard that His Excellency had assisted to carry some of the younger children to the boats. We accepted the statement as made in good faith and chronicled the incident in our respective journals. In an interview with Mr. Courtenay Boyle on the following Sunday at the Viceregal Lodge, we learned that the reported incident about Lord Spencer and the babies was a myth. Mr. Boyle did not, however, think it necessary that it should be contradicted, and as there is nothing which newspaper men dislike more than having to contradict statements they have made and which have been published, we did not volunteer to do so. "Lord Spencer carrying the babies" was, however, a standing joke of Mr. T. M. Healy for a long time afterwards whenever he wished to annoy the Viceroy. Sometime afterwards I met His Excellency at the rifle-shooting range at Raheny, a short distance from Dublin. In the course of conversation he said, "You know there was no truth about my carrying the babies." I replied by telling him the whole story.

CHAPTER XX.

Belmullet to Westport.

The afternoon of the day, the earlier events of which are described in the preceding chapter, was spent by Lord Spencer in paying one or two visits on the island and in the early evening His Excellency again went on board the gunboat, in which it had been arranged he should sail round the coast to Ballycroy, where it was intended he should land about eight o'clock next (Saturday) morning. We had, in accordance with the arrangements already detailed, forwarded by special car, as soon as we got up on Friday morning, the despatches we had written overnight, accompanying them with a note to the postmaster at Ballina to the effect that continuations of these despatches would be forwarded by the mail car leaving Belmullet at two in the afternoon. These continuations, containing our account of the embarkation of the emigrants, of the "carrying of the babies," and of Lord Spencer's subsequent movements were so forwarded; and the entire communication (consisting of the portion

written in the early hours of the morning and that written in the day-time) was in each case duly telegraphed the same night from Ballina, and appeared in the papers as one continuous despatch.

The horse which we had engaged at Bangor-Erris on Thursday afternoon pleased us so much that we resolved to retain him for the journey to Ballycroy on Friday evening. We dined early, and between six and seven o'clock set out on our return journey to Bangor-Erris, *en route* for Ballycroy, whence we purposed accompanying the Viceregal party to Westport. Darkness set in by the time we reached Bangor-Erris, where the road for Ballycroy and Westport diverged from the road to Ballina. There was no moon, and very few stars were visible. After a brief halt we resumed our journey, by which time it was pitch dark. About one hundred yards from the hotel we had to cross the Erris river by a very narrow ford, on either side of which the river was of considerable depth, more than sufficient at all events to have secured the upsetting of the car if the horse had swerved. Two of the peasantry of the village were kind enough to walk through the river, one at each side of the horse, and thus secured for us a safe passage without the disagreeable necessity of fording the river on foot. Our road for several miles was a lonely and unfrequented one; nothing occurred worthy of mention until just as we had reached the crown of a bridge and the horse's feet were on the falling ground, the animal fell, disposing himself in such an intricate

fashion, with one fore leg under and the other over one of the shafts of the car, that it was impossible for him to regain his feet without the harness being unfastened. Neither of my companions would go nearer to the animal than the rear of the car. I, who had some little acquaintance with horses, seated myself on the animal's head, while the driver set to work, as best he could in the darkness, to undo the tackling; he succeeded in this without having to cut very much leather, and my companions having assisted in dragging back the car, while I retained my seat on the horse's head, the animal, being freed from the car and from my weight, sprang to his feet. Fortunately the shafts of the car were not injured, and a piece of rope having been substituted for the cut portion of the harness, we were soon again on our way, thankful that the mishap had had no more serious result.

Ballycroy was reached within a few minutes of midnight. We found that the village consisted of one house, but that a house of enormous size, which as we discovered next morning, served as the hotel, the public house, the grocery, drapery and ironmongery establishments of the district for many miles around. But in all this huge establishment not a bed was on this night available, and scarcely a chair to sit upon. The Hussars who were to form Lord Spencer's escort in the morning were quartered in all corners of the premises, some on beds, some on "shake-downs" and others on chairs. The police, of whom there was

also a considerable number, were still worse off; the greater number of them had no resting place whatever, no place to sit, or even stand, except in the kitchen. Here we were fain at last to settle ourselves. I had, in the vain look-out for a sofa or other resting place, found in the large room in which the troops were lying two unoccupied chairs. These I transferred to the kitchen, and placing them in line with an arm chair, threw myself down, and drawing my travelling rug over me did my best to doze. Sleep, in the ordinary sense of the word, was out of the question; but, as I have already said, I have great faith in a short rest, and in even the briefest slumber. I have often, when tired writing at two or three in the morning, thrown myself on a sofa, or even lounged back in an arm chair for an hour or less, knowing that I should awaken at whatever time I fixed upon as being necessary, and I would then rise fresh as a lark—at least for the time required to finish my task, generally the completion of a letter which it was essential should be posted in time for the morning mail to London. My companions either did not so highly value what I esteemed so much, or they did not think it necessary to take advantage of it; perhaps it was because neither of them had resting accommodation equal to mine. At all events, they joined in the harmless revelry of the night; the singing of songs, Fenian and Orange, "The Wearing of the Green" and "Boyne Water," everything being taken in good part, and no one inclined to quarrel with

his neighbour on the trifling ground of the sentiment of a song.

As the dawn began to break, about half-past four, I felt fairly well refreshed, and I opened my eyes to find one of my confrères sitting on a form or stool and fast asleep. I allowed him to sleep on for a little. It was, at the same time, necessary that we should breakfast early in order that we might start in good time to reach Westport before or, at all events, simultaneously with the Viceregal party, and in any case, in good time for the two o'clock afternoon train from Westport to Dublin, by which, as we had been informed, His Excellency intended to travel. We had had sufficient experience of the difficulty, and indeed the impossibility of keeping pace with Lord Spencer on horseback while our mode of locomotion was by car. About six o'clock therefore I ordered breakfast. I was determined that our sleeping companion should eat his breakfast, and accordingly, after we had got him into the coffee room, I lifted him, chair and all, and placed him in front of a plate of bacon and eggs and a cup of tea, and then shook him, and urged him to eat. All was of no avail until at last I bethought myself of a peculiar device. I caught him by the shoulders and pushed him forward, until, while still seated in the chair, his body was in a perpendicular position. I then placed my hands on the back of the chair with my knuckles firmly set, one hand being opposite each shoulder-blade. In a second or two he unconsciously

allowed his shoulder-blades to bump against my knuckles, with the result that, after emitting a strong expletive, he sat up and ate a portion and drank some of the tea. I repeated the experiment again and again with the result that he, almost unconsciously, ate a hearty breakfast. I had still a little trouble in persuading him that it was necessary for us to make an immediate start; and that if we waited to "follow" His Excellency we would lose our train. At last he was induced to take his seat on the car. We reached Westport about one o'clock and had time to dispose of a hurried but welcome lunch before the Viceregal party drove up to the hotel. The time for the interview which had been arranged for between the Lord Lieutenant and the Guardians of Westport Union, on the subject of the stamping out of pleuro-pneumonia in cattle, was becoming very short, and at His Excellency's suggestion it was resolved that it should take place on the railway platform. The cavalcade started, the press party leading on a car with a swift horse attached. We reached the station about fifty yards in advance of the Viceroy. Lord Spencer entering the station received an address from the Guardians, and made a brief speech in reply. All bound for Dublin entered the train, and a few minutes after the scheduled time we were speeding along for the metropolis.

CHAPTER XXI.

Interview and Counter-Interview.

I did a little in the way of interviewing from time to time. My idea of what an interview should be, if the matter is one of a controversial nature, is that the interviewer should place himself in antagonism to the interviewed, so that the points in controversy may be clearly brought out, and fully discussed. Only in this way can the truth be elicited, and the merits or demerits of each side exhibited. I adopted this attitude in every case in which there was any marked difference of opinion on the subject in hand, and usually avoided giving the interview in the form of question and answer. In almost every case it is possible to dispense with that form without marring the sense, and it has the advantage of making the article read more smoothly. I think there was only one instance in which I departed from what I may call the "consecutive" style of recording an interview, which can as a rule be done with safety and without resulting in complaints of inaccuracy. This, I think, was shown by the fact that out of a large number

of interviews which I conducted in that way there was not a single complaint made, or correction asked for.

I have said that I departed in one instance from my usual custom. If it is not a contradiction in terms I might describe it as a double instance, for the case for the one side appeared on one day, and that for the other on the following day, namely, in *The Irish Times* of the 21st and 22nd of October, 1889, respectively. The Dublin Trades' Council—a body which then represented, and still continues to represent nearly all the trades' union societies in the city of Dublin—complained that the Artane (Roman Catholic) Industrial School was competing with the ordinary tradesmen of the city and that it was aided in its operations by a large annual contribution from the Corporation—of course out of the city rates. This was the cause of my being told off to interview the Director of the School. The Director was absent, but I was introduced to Mr. Nolan, who was in temporary charge of the institution. It is not my purpose to reproduce here any record of the interview, but I may state, in a sentence, that Mr. Nolan said there was no foundation for the charge of underselling; that they were bringing up the boys in the school so as to make them industrious citizens; that one result was that 95 per cent. of those who had been taught in it were doing well, and that there had been a very considerable reduction in juvenile crime, a result due, he believed, to the work of Artane and other similar schools.

When the report of this interview appeared on the morning of the 21st, early on that day a written request was received by the Editor, asking him to send a representative to interview a deputation from the Trades Council, and further requesting that it should be the same member of the staff who had interviewed Mr. Nolan. Accordingly in the evening I met the Chairman of the Council (Mr. Leahy), the Secretary (Mr. Simmons) and the Treasurer (Mr. O'Reilly). I was glad that in interviewing Mr. Nolan I had departed from my usual custom, and had given the record in the form of question and answer; for however desirable it was in the first instance, it was quite as much so in the second, where I was one to three, and I considered for that and other reasons that the only safe method was that which I adopted—to put down in shorthand every word that was said, whether by myself or by either of the three delegates. The interview lasted about three-quarters of an hour, and it occupied nearly two columns of the next morning's issue. The principal point urged by Mr. O'Reilly, the chief spokesman on the occasion, was that these boys were taught their respective trades at an earlier age (namely, twelve or fourteen years) than apprentices in the ordinary course, and consequently were able to go into the labour market at an earlier age, and as a result of this "the natural bread-winner was driven into enforced idleness." In reply I pointed out that a considerable number of different industrial occupations

were taught in Artane, and that no less than sixty boys were being taught agriculture, and I asked would not all these, besides being producers, be consumers also, and thus supply industrial employment to each other? Mr. O'Reilly said he would have to answer "Yes," but that a great injury was done in the meantime because the boys had no control over the fruits of their industry; and he contended that the products of the labour of these boys ought not to be put on the market.

I was afterwards credibly informed that the Council were not very well satisfied with the result of the interview, and that there was a suggestion of a motion censuring the three gentlemen for having initiated it; but the matter was allowed to drop.

CHAPTER XXII.

Special Correspondence.

As I sit down to write this portion of my reminiscences in 1909 I have before me the announcement in *The Irish Times* of the death of Mr. J. C. Parkinson, one of several special correspondents sent over from time to time by *The Daily News* during my twenty-two years' connection with that journal. The others included Mr. Senior (still living I believe), the late Mr. Archibald Forbes, the Messrs. Paul, Mr. Becker and Mr. M'Donald.

My first contributions to *The Daily News* as special correspondent were a series of five letters in September, 1879, on Distress in Ireland. The materials for these, as well as for all my subsequent special letters, were necessarily obtained in the most hurried fashion, as I could not well be spared from my Dublin duties for more than two or three days at a time; but my thorough knowledge of the country, especially that acquired during the immediately preceding five years, enabled me to pick up information in the most reliable

quarters in the shortest time. In September, 1879, I left Dublin on Saturday morning for the West of Ireland. I broke my journey at Athlone, the boundary between Leinster and Connaught; here I spent about two hours, making inquiries of the police in the first instance, and subsequently interviewed a merchant of standing in the town; I also visited one or two of the farms in the neighbourhood and saw the blighted potato crop; while on the banks of the Shannon, which runs through the town, I had ample ocular demonstration of the great damage to the still unsaved hay crop, the field-cocks standing in from two to three feet of water, in consequence of the overflow of the great river, a result which could easily have been avoided by transferring the hay in proper time to higher ground. I took the next train to Ballinasloe, and there, on the banks of the Suck, I found a state of things somewhat similar to that which I had seen at Athlone, and heard reports of a similar character as to the failure of the potatoes. I left by the evening train for Galway, and that night, before going to bed, I wrote my first letter. On Sunday I interviewed some people in the town and drove out to Spiddal, a village about ten miles from Galway, on the estate of the late Lord Morris (then Chief Justice Morris). Returning to Galway in the afternoon I left by the evening (up) train for Athlone, and having handed in my despatch at the telegraph office there, I got the (down) night mail train at about ten o'clock for Castlerea, where I arrived about

midnight. Next morning I interviewed Mr. John FitzGibbon, a Castlerea merchant, who stated that the amount of money due to him by farmers was about £15,000. I then proceeded to Westport where I interviewed Mr. Sidney Smith, agent of the Marquis of Sligo, taking no notes save where figures came in. I had just time to catch the two o'clock afternoon train for Ballina. The moment I got into the carriage I jotted down in my note book, in shorthand, what was practically a verbatim note of the interview with Mr. Smith, the matter being then fresh in my memory. I spent the afternoon and evening in Ballina getting as much information as I could, and left that (Monday) evening by the night mail train for Dublin, where I arrived a little after five o'clock next morning. The five letters which I prepared appeared in *The Daily News* in the course of the week.

A somewhat curious incident occurred a couple of nights after my return to Dublin. I happened to visit *The Freeman's Journal* office. Mr. William O'Brien, who was then attached to *The Freeman* and who had just contributed to it a series of letters on the subject of Distress in the South and West, was present, together with several other journalists. The conversation turned on his letters, and eventually someone asked him if he had met *The Daily News* correspondent. He answered "No. I hear he has gone south." It was not then known who the special correspondent was, and I rather enjoyed the situation. I should add that

The Freeman's Journal had transferred to its columns from *The Daily News* a considerable portion of my first letter, also without knowing who the writer was. The interview with Mr. Sidney Smith was transferred to *The Daily Express* to which I was then attached. This was also done before the identity of the special correspondent leaked out, as it did, of course, in a few days.

My next contribution as special correspondent of *The Daily News* was an inquiry into the alleged miracles at Knock, County Mayo, in March, 1880. The gathering of the information on that occasion was conducted in the same rapid manner as the inquiry into the distress in the previous September, but there was much less travelling to be done. I spent two days at Knock seeking information, my principal informants being Archdeacon Kavanagh, the parish priest, and several people, including the Archdeacon's servant girl, who stated they had seen the apparition. The " miracles " did not long survive the publication of my four letters, each a little over a column in length, and for which I received the handsome remuneration of twenty guineas.

I revisited Knock in June, 1882, being in the neighbourhood recording the remarkable funeral procession at the burial of Walter M'Murrough Bourke, who, with his escort, Corporal Wallace, had been shot a few days before at Rahassane Park, near Loughrea, and whose remains were removed from Loughrea to the family

burial ground near Knock. I called on Archdeacon Kavanagh, and I had no difficulty in discovering that my reception was not over cordial, and in that respect was very different from that which I received on my first visit. I found very few "pilgrims" on this occasion. Moreover, the wall of the chapel on which the "apparition" was said to have appeared (and the plaster picked from which was credited with being the curing agency), was now carefully re-plastered, and there was no sign of any attempt on the part of visitors to attack the new wall-covering. The interior of the chapel had also been greatly improved, the cost being defrayed, as I was given to understand, from the offerings of "pilgrims."

A curious coincidence may be mentioned in this connection. Miss Bourke whose "cure" by a visit to Knock chapel had been prominently recorded by Mr. Thomas Sexton, then, or afterwards, M.P. (Mr. Sexton himself being my informant), in *The Weekly News*, but who, upon my visit in 1880, a fortnight later, was dead, was a sister of Mr. Walter Bourke, whose funeral gave me the opportunity of making my second visit. Archdeacon Kavanagh had on the first occasion related her visit to the chapel and supposed "cure," but had to wind up with the observation, "But poor thing she is dead since." The interval between her "cure" and her death was only two or three weeks.

I may add that the then Chairman of the Midland Great Western Railway Company (the late Sir Ralph Cusack) said in my hearing, shortly after my visit to Knock, that the traffic to that shrine had fallen off very much since my letters.

The next occasion (after the first visit to Knock) on which I was asked to furnish special letters to *The Daily News* was on the first day of the sitting of the Courts of the Sub-Land Commission in November, 1881. I could not imitate Mr. Parnell and be in two or more places at once, so I had to make my choice of one out of four places in which Sub-Commission Courts were to sit simultaneously. I chose Castleblayney, County Monaghan. I left Dublin the previous evening and spent the night in Dundalk so as to reach Castleblayney in time for the sitting of the Court next morning. On my way there I commenced my despatch for *The Daily News*, consisting mainly of preliminary matter, and this I supplemented, at the close of the day, with a description of the proceedings in Court, the entire letter occupying nearly three columns; added to this I sent a report to the Dublin paper to which I was attached, the two despatches making over five columns. The tenant-applicant was a Mr. M'Atavey, who worked for almost the whole of the year in Scotland while his wife managed the farm in Ireland. An entire day was spent in hearing the case, with the ridiculous result that a reduction of the rent to the extent of half-a-crown was decided on. I accompanied the Sub-Commissioners to

Enniskillen and from that to Ballyshannon, and one or two other towns in County Donegal, and as occasionally a despatch was held over for a day or two, there was one issue of *The Daily News* at this period which contained three of my despatches, covering between five and six columns, on the "Working of the Land Act." It soon became obvious that the four Sub-Commissioners originally appointed were quite insufficient in number for the work of re-valuing the land of Ireland, for that was what it was speedily realised their task would amount to. My special letters on the "Working of the Land Act" numbered about twenty.

There were many other similar special letters on different topics, especially on evictions, to which much importance was attached. One of these dealt with evictions on the property of a Mrs. Morony, of Miltown-Malbay, County Clare. The tenants, by order of the League, allowed themselves to be evicted, and were induced to take shelter in Land League huts. One of these tenants showed me in his hut a deposit receipt for £200, and from all I could learn there was not one of Mrs. Morony's tenants who was not well able to pay his rent.

On another occasion I went, by request of *The Daily News*, in April, 1880, to Queenstown to record the arrival of the steamer "Constellation" from New York with a cargo of food-stuffs for the relief of distress in Ireland. Other special journeys were undertaken

at different times; but there was one of special importance on account of its sequel. It appeared in *The Daily News* of Monday, 1st February, 1886. It was conversant with the state of Kerry, and it arose out of an attack by moonlighters on the house of Mr. Curtin, of Castle Farm, near Killarney. Mr. Curtin was shot dead, and one of the party of moonlighters shared the same fate from a shot fired by Mr. Curtin in self-defence. A short time after the tragedy, the people attending Mass at the parish chapel at Firies, broke up the pew of the Curtin family. The following Sunday I went specially to Firies, anticipating that there might be renewed disturbances. On the Saturday I interviewed Dr. Higgins, the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese, at his residence in Killarney. He received me courteously, and answered freely all the questions I put to him. That part of my despatch occupied fully a column of *The Daily News*. On Sunday, having gone to Tralee on Saturday night, I drove to Firies chapel, and there I succeeded in getting an interview with the parish priest, Father O'Connor, which was published next morning in *The Daily News* together with the record of the interview with the Bishop. In the course of the interview with Father O'Connor, which occupied considerably more than a column of the paper, he explained that the object of the moonlighters was to make it impossible for anyone to take a farm from which another had been evicted; and from where we were standing he pointed to a

great open landscape in front of us and said there were over two thousand acres of it, on the Kenmare estate, from which the tenants had been evicted, and not an acre of it re-taken.

At the Parnell Commission the reverend gentleman was cross-examined, on behalf of *The Times*, out of the report of the interview in *The Daily News*, he having been previously examined on behalf of the defendants, who, probably did not anticipate that counsel for *The Times* had such a rod in pickle for their witness. The direct examination concluded shortly before the hour for adjournment arrived. When the Court resumed next morning, Mr. John Atkinson (now Lord Atkinson) had before him a file of *The Daily News*, with the record of the interview. The cross-examination was severe, and it is understood that it was principally on what was then elicited from Father O'Connor that the Commissioners based their finding, "That the defendants did not denounce the system of intimidation pursued by the League although they knew its effects."

I was present *throughout* the whole of every sitting of the Parnell Commission from its opening on the 22nd of October, 1888, until the adjournment on the 24th of July, 1889. I was sent over by *The Irish Times* in charge of a special staff, which for some time supplied a report each day extending to seventeen or eighteen columns, including a column or a column and a half of a descriptive introduction by the present writer. I was therefore present during the cross-examination of

Father O'Connor, whom I had seen sitting in the body of the Court for a couple of days previously. While the cross-examination was proceeding Sir James Hannan asked that the entire article should be read. Counsel replied that he had completed the reading so far as the interview was concerned.

I am, as I have good reason to believe, the only person (with two exceptions) who, knowing Pigott, saw him "escape." The two exceptions were his two "keepers." I was standing near the entrance to Anderton's hotel, a few minutes after the adjournment of the Court, on the last day that Pigott appeared in the witness box, when I saw him, accompanied by two men—evidently policemen or ex-policemen in plain clothes, and who I at once concluded had him in their keeping—walk together into the hotel. They remained inside less than five minutes and then came out again. Pigott immediately walked across Fleet Street, at that hour densely crowded, and in broad daylight, while his two "keepers" remained at the door of the hotel. I quite realised at the moment that Pigott would not be seen again in the witness box, and that the men who had charge of him did not prevent his "escape." The next news of his whereabouts was that he had committed suicide in Madrid. I may add, in this connection, that any impartial jury would have come to the conclusion, before Pigott was five minutes in the witness-box, that he was telling a fabricated story. Before he had

answered half a dozen questions in his direct examination he was halting and hesitating in his replies, and trembling like an aspen leaf.

One of the most interesting incidents during those nine months was the cross-examination of Mr. T. P. O'Connor, who found in the person of Mr. Ronan, who conducted the cross-examination, a foeman worthy of his steel. Mr. Ronan proved himself a capital cross-examiner, especially in his capacity for quickly springing on the witness pertinent questions arising out of the answer given to the preceding one.

So far as special correspondence is concerned, I was frequently sent out as "special commissioner." This was not confined to *The Daily News*. To the Dublin papers with which from time to time I was connected I frequently contributed as "special correspondent." When I attended the opening of the Glasgow Exhibition on behalf of *The Irish Times*, I supplemented the matter dealing with the opening by contributing an article entitled "A Record of Forty Years' Progress." As a mere boy I had gone with my parents to reside in Glasgow; I had a very vivid recollection of Glasgow as it was then, having resided there for eight or nine years, and having thereafter visited it from time to time, I had exceptional opportunities of gaining information and retaining it in my memory, as to the progress made by the commercial capital of Scotland during the entire period.

I also contributed many special articles to *The Irish Times* between 1886 and 1909. The chief of these consisted of a series of six or seven lengthy articles on "Ulster and Compulsory Purchase," to obtain the materials for which I travelled for over a week, visiting every county and all the principal towns in the province. At the close of my last article I wrote as follows :—

> To sum up the results of my inquiries, I found that while in some places there was no great keenness on the part of the tenants to have Compulsory Purchase brought about, in others —Fermanagh, for example—the question had so far received neither consideration nor discussion, and had not given rise to any agitation whatever; yet in the greater number of the districts through which I passed the feeling of the farmers was almost universally in favour of the proposal. That feeling, however, was based on the notion that Mr. Russell's scheme, and the terms embodied in it, could be carried into effect. They did not disguise from themselves the difficulties in the way, especially that of getting the State, in the circumstances, to embark upon such a huge financial operation; the difficulty of, and the cost of administering a scheme which would occupy a whole army of administrators for a considerable number of years, although, perhaps, in the end the cost might not be more than the heavy continuous expenditure required for the work of the Land Commission; the difficulty of getting the British taxpayer to consent to give what might be briefly described as a bonus to the landlords—

> almost the only suggestion on that head being that it would be but a *quid pro quo* for the "over-taxation" of Ireland; the difficulty of reconciling the landlords, who as a body were opposed to compulsory sale, and especially those of them to whom compulsory sale would spell ruin, and, perhaps, most of all, the difficulty presented by the fact that compulsory purchase, if granted to Ulster, could not be denied to the other three provinces, where, admittedly, the interest of the tenant in his holding is less substantial and where, therefore, apart from any question of a possible combination against the payment of rent, the security for repayment to the State would not be so satisfactory.

I have mentioned Mr. T. W. Russell's scheme, which he was at that very moment expounding throughout Ulster, and which, as briefly put by himself, was a scheme that would not cost the State a single penny. All that would have to be done, he said, was to issue Consols as money was required for the purchase, and a refund would come from the instalments paid by the purchasers. In conversation, however, Mr. Russell admitted in reply to a question by me that every new issue of Consols would make them less valuable, and would necessitate that succeeding issues should be issued at a lower rate, or, in other words, the payment by the State of a higher rate of interest. The continuous fall in the price of Consols since the period I am writing about completely confirms what I suggested, and which Mr. Russell was compelled to admit.

Perhaps the most remarkable letter which I wrote was one that appeared in *The Daily Chronicle* on the 1st or 2nd of January, 1890. It was headed "Jury-packing in Ireland," and occupied nearly two columns of the paper, the columns at that time being, I think, somewhat larger than at present.

The letter, which was headed "From a Correspondent," was a bold defence of jury-packing, on the ground that it was rendered absolutely necessary by the action of the Nationalists themselves in practically telling jurors that it was their duty to give a verdict, not "according to the evidence," as they were sworn to do, but according to their own views of what was "just," which usually meant, in agrarian cases, a verdict in the teeth of the evidence. Mr. William O'Brien, both by his speeches and by articles in *United Ireland*, of which he was Editor, was pointed to as the chief offender in this way, but others were also referred to, and quotations from the speeches and writings relied on were given.

There were two years of my connection with the Dublin Press during which I was not on the regular staff of any paper. These two years proved the most successful of all from a financial point of view. The first was the year 1885, and the second the year 1886. Towards the end of 1884 the Nationalists began to press very strongly on the conductors of *The Freeman's Journal* that I ought not to be retained longer on its staff. Accordingly a letter was written by the Chief of the Reporting Staff (by direction of Mr. E. D. Gray)

expressing his deep regret that in consequence of my acting in the dual capacity (*Freeman's Journal* and *Daily News*) it was deemed necessary that I should cease at the end of the year to be a member of the *Freeman's Journal* staff. The result was that my name ceased to be on the pay-sheet. But for the whole of the year 1885 I was, when convenient to myself, a daily "casual" employed by *The Freeman's Journal*, and as I was no longer tied to that paper I was at liberty to go here, there, and everywhere, to do official shorthand writing, and as a result my earnings during the year, from all sources, were larger than in any preceding one. At the end of 1885 it turned out that even my "casual" connection with *The Freeman* was regarded by the Irish party as objectionable. I was then immediately taken over as a "casual" by *The Irish Times*, a position which I occupied up to the end of the year, when, on the resignation of a member of the staff, I was put into his place. There was a good deal of shorthand writing—Land Commissions, Belfast Riots' Commission and the Educational Endowments' Commission, of which latter the late Lord Justice FitzGibbon, the late Mr. Justice (William) O'Brien and the present Under-Secretary for Ireland were members. On one occasion I went with the Educational Endowment Commissioners to Raphoe and Derry, sittings being held in both these places. Belfast followed, and, I think, before the sittings terminated the Belfast Riots' Commission began, and I attached

myself to it. The transcript of each day's proceedings of that Commission had to be completed by the following morning, and I remember that on the last day on which I took notes I had not finished at five o'clock in the morning. I was sleepy and terribly fatigued, and but for a happy thought which occurred to me I would not have been able to finish. The window of the coffee room of the Eglinton hotel, where I was writing, was open. It occurred to me that if I went to the open window and inhaled the fresh morning air for a few minutes I might make more progress. I did so, and then resumed my writing and was able to go on for about five minutes longer; I repeated the operation several times, and in about twenty minutes had completed the transcript.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Distress Problem.

The cry of distress had, in 1882, become chronic in the West. In several instances it was undoubtedly so, particularly in portions of Clare, Galway, Mayo and Donegal; sometimes it was merely the distress which always exists where poverty abounds, and where the conditions of life are such that poverty is inevitable. In other cases it was to a large extent "got up" and without justification.

With regard to this question generally, and especially with regard to the cry of famine which was raised in 1879, it is beyond doubt that many of the statements which were published at that time were grossly exaggerated. There was a partial failure of the potato crop in some parts of Ireland, but from my own very extensive observation during the autumn, winter and spring of 1879-80 I can state that the extent of the failure was grossly over-estimated, and the likelihood of famine or starvation was much over-stated. The failure of the potato crop was not such as would have been likely to hinder any of the tenants, except the very

poorest class, from "pulling through" for another season, with the forbearance of the landlord and shopkeeper. It should always be borne in mind that in Ireland the organisation of the Poor Law system is so perfect that no one need starve. It is true that many of the people have a dislike to entering the workhouse, and that under certain circumstances if they choose not to do so there is no relief; but this dislike of the workhouse has been sedulously instilled into them for political purposes. There is no instinctive dislike to the receipt of relief such, for example, as would apply equally to outdoor and indoor relief. The same men who lauded what they were pleased to call an "instinctive dislike" to entering the workhouse were the men who most readily and most lavishly granted outdoor relief, in utter disregard in many cases of the conditions imposed by statute. It is not from a desire to inculcate habits of self-reliance that these men seek to foster in the minds of the poor people a spirit of resistance to indoor relief; it is because of the conditions of indoor relief—because the "test" which it supplies of the indigence of the applicant is a real test and not a sham one—that they teach them "instinctively" to dislike the workhouse. Hence, whatever may be said regarding the prospects of famine in 1879-80, it should be remembered that death from starvation, unless self-imposed, was simply impossible. The richest miser may starve himself to death if he likes, but from what quarter would sympathy come, or regret for his fate?

The outcry, therefore, about possible starvation in Ireland at this period was in the very nature of things unwarranted. It is, of course, another question whether there might not be many cases in which people who were sober and industrious (as far as the conditions under which they live permitted of industry) and whose income at best left no margin, should not receive such assistance as would recompense them for the deficiency in their potato crop ; but it is by no means to be taken for granted that the deficiency in the potato crop was such as to reduce very materially the resources of the poorest class on the western seaboard. The quantity of potatoes grown by people of this class of tenants—it is absurd to speak of them as farmers—is very small, and is intended, as a rule, solely for home consumption. It will be said, perhaps, that that is the strongest proof that if the potatoes failed the food supply was gone. But, first of all, the potatoes did not fail to anything like the extent which was alleged, and, secondly, a very small amount of relief either in meal or in money, would, in the case of really poor tenants, have restored the equilibrium. It is true that the people of the class now referred to raise only potatoes sufficient to supply their own wants; but it is by no means true that potatoes are the only or even the chief article of food which they use. I have said that the extent of the potato failure was exaggerated. No doubt I will be confronted with the returns of the Registrar-General for Ireland as to the immense loss caused to the farmers of Ireland by

the deficiency in the potato crop of 1879. It must be remembered that this loss was estimated first of all on returns which were necessarily vague as to the actual deficiency in quantity, and which, moreover, proceeded on the assumption that the money value of the deficiency was properly represented by the enhanced prices which the very existence of that deficiency enabled farmers to get for the sound produce of their potato fields.

Further than this, however, I assert, and the market records bear me out, that in the principal market towns of the West of Ireland, Galway, Castlebar, Claremorris, Westport, Ballina and elsewhere there was an abundance of potatoes for sale in March, 1880. and at prices which indicated that there was no scarcity. Potatoes of the best quality were being sold at that time at fourpence halfpenny a stone, that is, at a period long after the "reports" to the Mansion House Committee, the Duchess of Marlborough's Committee, and other relief organisations described the people as having "eaten their last potato." The statement was no doubt true as regards a few people, but only a few. There can be no doubt that the wet season caused a very large deficiency in the crop; but, firstly, this deficiency affected chiefly the more substantial class of farmers—men removed from all chance of starvation; and, secondly, even these were at least partially compensated by the increase in price.

I have spoken of the conditions under which the peasantry of the West labour in regard to the extent of the opportunities permitted of industrial occupation. What labouring man is there in England or Scotland, be he agricultural or town labourer, who would not be constantly on the brink of starvation if he could only obtain work for two or three months in the year? Yet this is the position of the very small tenants in the West of Ireland; their holdings do not afford the means of decent support. The condition of things in that respect would be very little changed by the abolition of rent on such holdings. The labour to be performed, or at all events that which is performed, does not supply occupation for more than three months, probably much less, out of the twelve. It is true that in many cases these tenants hire their labour; and it is sometimes put forward as one of their grievances that many of them supplement their means of living by migrating to England or Scotland to perform harvest work. But surely it is not seriously contended that a Connemara or a Mayo peasant has a right to live in idleness during nine months of the year, and that if he chooses to do so the deficiency in his income ought to be made up by the State, which means, of course, by the taxpayers.

While saying so much on this subject, and though convinced that there was a great deal of sham distress paraded at the time to which I refer, and also at a later period, yet it was better that the cry of distress should

be listened to and responded to, as it was, than that under the influence of even a simulated feeling of pride or self-respect any single individual should have died of starvation, or suffered seriously in health from the want of sufficient food. At the same time I am aware that the charitable relief dispensed in 1879-80 led to great abuses, and to the still further undermining of the spirit of self-reliance, a spirit which in many parts of the country had already reached the vanishing point. "Everybody got it" has been the burthen of the song of the witnesses, of all classes, who were examined at the Parnell Commission on the subject of the distribution of the relief money at that period. I myself witnessed, in the last days of February, 1880, hale, healthy women—women who seemed to have taken as their motto the saying "Laugh and grow fat" —visiting the house of the priest of Claremorris parish on relief days, and, having got the relief, walking out, chatting and laughing with each other in a fashion which certainly did not indicate any apprehension of starvation, and which conveyed much more forcibly to my mind the impression that they were "laughing in their sleeve" at the charitable public.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Visit to North-west Donegal.

On the evening of Thursday, 21st December, 1882, in compliance with a request from *The Daily News*, I left Dublin by the night mail train at half-past seven o'clock, for Glencolumbkille, to inquire into the condition of the peasantry in the neighbourhood. It is a bleak, barren and mountainous district in the extreme north-west of Donegal, and, therefore, on the extreme north-west coast of Ireland. I had to do the journey, as it were, by forced marches, for I was anxious to be back in Dublin by the morning of the following Monday (Christmas Day). I got up at my usual hour on Thursday morning (eight o'clock) and attended to my duties in Dublin during the day. On my way to Strabane I did my best to sleep in the railway carriage, but I have rarely been able to do so, and on this occasion finding it impossible, I utilised the time by writing the last of a series of articles on Distress in the County Galway, also for *The Daily News*.

My journey to West Donegal was undertaken for the purpose of extending to that district inquiries of a similar nature to those which I had just been making in Galway, and, a week or so earlier, in the County of Clare. Strabane was reached at three in the morning. This was the end of my railway journey; for although the Stranorlar line of railway was in existence there was no train before eight or nine o'clock in the morning; moreover, Stranorlar was only a very short section of my intended journey. Besides, if I waited for the train I should miss the through mail car conveyance, and not only should I have to take a special car, which would largely increase the expense of the journey, but there was the possibility that there might be some difficulty in getting a special car at some of the stages of my journey. I accordingly made up my mind to proceed by the mail car, which left Strabane about half an hour after the arrival of the train. I was well protected against the weather, and it was needed, for before I had completed my journey I experienced not only showers of rain but also snow. I had on no less than four coats—a frock coat, a light overcoat, a heavy overcoat and a waterproof coat; encased in these, and with a good rug over my knees, I thought I could face any weather. There was a bright moon up to about six in the morning, but it then became pitch dark until day began to dawn, about eight. I had the pleasure of seeing on my way between Strabane and Stranorlar a magnificent lunar rainbow; it appeared to me to be

as brilliant as any solar rainbow I had ever seen, while the colours struck me as being more distinctly marked. I have often thought since that if I could foresee that my desire would be gratified I should almost be inclined to travel again all night in order to realise once more the pleasure of seeing a phenomenon so rare and so beautiful. It was still dark when Stranorlar was reached, and the transfer from one car to the other had to be accomplished with the aid of a lantern. As on the first stage of my journey, so on the second—from Stranorlar to Donegal, I was the sole passenger. Day was beginning to break as we passed through Barnes' Gap, a narrow valley bounded by two steep mountain ranges, that on the south side being especially precipitous and rocky; huge boulders project from the mountain-side at a great height, and portions of these sometimes break away and carry destruction to any living thing they may encounter as they roll down with ever-increasing velocity. The river which runs through the valley is also a picturesque sight when the rains are heavy, and the flow, always rapid, becomes of great volume. There was time to breakfast comfortably in the town of Donegal while the local mails were being sorted; Donegal being the head office of the district.

The next stage was to Killybegs, passing through Mountcharles, Ardara, Inver and one or two smaller villages. At each of these places I made the most of the few minutes halt to inquire into the condition of

the people, as I had likewise done during the short stay in the town of Donegal. It is wonderful what an amount of trustworthy information an experienced journalist can pick up in a short time, if he be not altogether a stranger in the district, and if he knows something of the habits and characteristics of the people amongst whom he is making enquiries. There was a somewhat longer stay at Killybegs, and, apart from that, there were better opportunities of obtaining information. At last the car started for the final stage, Carrick (or Glencolumbkille), *via* Kilcar. Distress was reported to exist in Kilcar, almost as keen, I was told, as in the more remote district of Glencolumbkille; but as the brief delay in exchanging the mail bags was not sufficient to enable me to prosecute inquiries properly, I determined to postpone them until my return journey. Carrick was reached about five o'clock in the evening. I was astonished and more than delighted to find at the end of my fifty miles drive on a December day, on an outside car, an hotel which for comfort in every particular would vie with the best to be found in any country town in Ireland.

As I entered I encountered a gentleman whom from his garb I rightly guessed to be a Protestant clergyman. I introduced myself, and in a brief conversation extracted from him a considerable amount of information about the state of the district, of which, as it turned out, he was rector. He was a thoroughly intelligent gentleman; but it astonished me to learn that he had

never even heard of the important London daily newspaper on behalf of which I had come so far. He even asked where it was published.

I ordered my dinner and bed to be got in readiness at once, for I was completely "done up." While dinner was being prepared I called on the parish priest, Father Gallagher, and informed him of the object of my visit as clearly as I could, having regard to the extreme fatigue from which I was suffering. I was so exhausted physically that it was with some difficulty I could express myself coherently. Father Gallagher volunteered to be my guide next day to Glencolumbkille, which I learned was still some eight or ten miles distant. I went back to the hotel and dined, and by seven o'clock was fast asleep, and did not stir until after eight o'clock next morning. I visited Father Gallagher immediately after breakfast. He had, I found, arranged for a levee of which I was to be the central figure, and the peasantry, especially the peasant women of the neighbourhood, were to be the attendants. They were voluble enough in the description of their poverty and distress; it was impossible to discredit their sincerity. Who could doubt that in such a district, where the earth yields but scanty return as the result of very hard labour, there must be chronic poverty and ever-recurring distress? The main cause of the special distress at this period was the loss caused by the hurricane which swept over the district, as it did over the whole of Ireland on an early

day in October—Sunday the 1st of October I think—and which caused the destruction of a large quantity of the reaped, but still ungarnered oats crop. Another cause, as I was informed, was the almost superhuman effort made by these poor people to take advantage of the Arrears Act, which had been passed in the preceding Session. These poor women, whom Father Gallagher had summoned over-night to be interviewed by me in the morning, could every one of them understand and speak English, but whether from the greater facility with which, naturally, they spoke Irish, or from a feeling that it was more politic to allow their story to filter through the sympathetic mind of their parish priest before it reached me, must be a matter of conjecture ; they in fact, although speaking in English when asked to do so, invariably reverted at the first opportunity to the vernacular. The levee over, Father Gallagher's car was brought out and we started on our mission of seeing the people, and judging by ocular demonstration and searching inquiry, of their actual condition. As a preliminary we visited the works at Teelin, where a pier was being constructed under the supervision of the Board of Works. The pier which was intended chiefly to provide accommodation for the fishermen of the district gave rise, at a subsequent period, to considerable discussion in the Press and in Parliament, it being alleged that the work had been done in a slovenly and inefficient manner. At the time at which I visited it, however, in company with Father Gallagher,

only the bright side of things was visible; the works were giving employment to the people of the district, the alleged inefficiency being still a matter of the future.

Leaving Teelin we returned almost to the point from which we had started, and then struck across the mountain for Glencolumbkille. The closed-up houses of some evicted tenants were shown to me on the way, and some tenants were introduced. Father Gallagher, who was an ardent advocate of the late Dr. Lyons' scheme for the re-afforestation of Ireland, pointed out the spot where he said it was contemplated to commence that work in Donegal. I subsequently, as recorded elsewhere, had the pleasure of accompanying Dr. Lyons on the occasion of the actual planting of the young trees. At last we came in view of Glencolumbkille proper, a valley gradually widening, and lowering in its level until at last it opened into a bay in and out of which the waters of the Atlantic were on that day peacefully flowing and ebbing, but regarding which I could well credit the statement that in stormy weather the waves dashed in with great fury and the wind swept with uncurbed violence through the open glen, carrying devastation in its train. I was informed that the storm of October had carried away a large portion of the corn crops, many of the sheaves having been blown from field to field until they were deposited in the river which runs through the valley, and, of course, were completely lost.

It is not my object in these reminiscences however to deal, save incidentally, with the matters into which I was sent to inquire. Whatever interest these pages may have must be derived, I feel, from the narrative of personal adventures. The full accounts of the results of my visits to Glencolumbkille and other districts are available in the columns of *The Daily News*. These contributions (covering a period of over twenty years) may yet find their way into print in a collected form. It will therefore be sufficient to say that as the result of my travels, on this pre-Christmas Saturday, I arrived at the conclusion that while there had undoubtedly been considerable loss sustained by the peasantry, the distress which existed was in great part due to the conditions under which they continuously lived, and that these were largely the result of the great love of their mountain homes. It was also due, I must in justice add, to their strong feelings of family affection. Rather than allow an old or infirm, or a young but delicate member of their family to be removed from a corner in their comfortless, damp and draughty hovels to the much more comfortable and healthy wards of the workhouse, they would retain them and share their last bite or sup with them, a mistaken sentiment perhaps, but one which it is impossible not to respect.

We returned to Carrick about five o'clock in the evening. The good priest had invited me to dine and, although it was a fast day with him, he provided for me an excellent "Protestant" dinner. Only twenty-four

hours had elapsed since my arrival, but I determined to cover a good portion of my return journey before I should sleep. Taking leave of Father Gallagher, therefore, after dinner, I set out by special car for Killybegs, *via* Kilcar, at which last-mentioned place I halted for a short time to make inquiries. I slept at Killybegs on Saturday night, wrote my first letter on Sunday forenoon, and in the afternoon, about two o'clock, started by mail car for Strabane, *via* Donegal and Stranorlar. Strabane was reached in time for the night mail train to Dublin by which I continued my journey, arriving in the metropolis at palf-past five on Monday (Christmas) morning. From Thursday evening I had travelled about three hundred and fifty miles by train, and over one hundred and twenty by road ; but this hurried travelling enabled me to accomplish the object of my visit, and yet be at home on Christmas day.

The publication of my letters was followed by the visit, a few days later, of the Chief Secretary (Sir George Trevelyan) to West Donegal. I was, perhaps, justified in regarding the circumstance as something more than a mere coincidence.

CHAPTER XXV.

The "Daily News," "United Ireland" and myself.

It is not my desire to bring into these personal reminiscences anything of a political character, save as it may help to throw light on the methods adopted by the Nationalist party, and especially by Nationalist journals in Ireland. These have been to some extent illustrated in preceding pages; but as the title of this work is Fifty Years of Irish Journalism it would be incomplete if I overlooked the persistent efforts of the Nationalist party and the Nationalist journals to denounce all journalists who did not see eye to eye with themselves, and especially those who had a connection with English newspapers. The chief sinner in this respect was *United Ireland*, which was started by Mr. Parnell, in July, 1881, Mr. William O'Brien being appointed Editor. At that date I had been for nearly fifteen years the Dublin correspondent of *The Daily News*, and I continued to fill that position until March, 1889, and during the latter period I was constantly being denounced (by name) in the columns of *United*

Ireland. These denunciations were simply unmitigated abuse, without the slightest attempt to show that I had, in my contributions to *The Daily News*, stated any untruth or made any misrepresentation whatever. These were the tactics not only of the Nationalist newspapers, but of the great bulk of the Nationalist party in Ireland. They hated free and honest journalism.

They made similar charges, usually couched in the vaguest language, against the Dublin newspapers; but they reserved the full vials of their wrath for the Dublin correspondents of the English papers, and, as will be seen, the chief "offenders" were the late Dr. Patton, for nearly forty years Editor of *The Daily Express*, and myself, a colleague of his on that journal for fifteen years. Dr. Patton became Dublin correspondent of *The Times* in 1866, and I became correspondent of *The Daily News* near the close of 1867. The extracts which follow show that we were frequently bracketed together in *United Ireland*, our names being given—a gross breach of journalistic etiquette, and, having regard to the terms in which we were referred to, one which was calculated to endanger our lives. Many of these abusive articles were gross libels, devoid of the slightest foundation in fact.

I had an opportunity, at a very early stage of the Land League agitation—when in fact it was holding its meetings in the dingy back room in Middle Abbey Street, already referred to—of gauging, with substantial

accuracy, the Land League's idea of a free Press. I subsequently wrote and published the following in a pamphlet :—

> "The Land League, it will be remembered, was still an infant institution when Mr. Patrick Egan proposed to exclude from its meetings the representative of one of the Dublin newspapers—*The Daily Express*. There were, however, more prudent men in the organisation than Mr. Patrick Egan, and the proposal was negatived after considerable discussion, in which the imprudence of the proposal was the chief or rather the sole argument urged against it. But with a Parliament in power reflecting the opinions of *United Ireland* there would no longer be any necessity for prudence. The plea that opposition journals lived by lying would be sufficient.*

The following is an extract from *United Ireland* of 12th January, 1884 :—

> "The Irish public will sooner or later have to bestir themselves to stamp out the lying brood of correspondents who live upon the infamous traffic with the English news agencies and the London papers. It is no exaggeration to say that these creatures are a greater curse to Ireland than the whole hierarchy of Castle officials from Earl Spencer down to the last new informer. The evil has only to be resolutely grappled with to be put down, and we hereby give public warning that the news

* "The Real Danger of Home Rule," Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, 1886.

> agencies, or rather lies agencies, will not be tolerated longer in their present system of secret service to the Government. The men who send these telegrams are known. We have on hands the materials to publish a full list of them, with full particulars of their political and newspaper connections. On the turf, jockeys who misconduct themselves are warned off every racecourse. Newspaper correspondents obtain facilities at the hands of the public for doing their business on the understanding that these facilities shall be honestly employed. The fraudulent correspondent is not a bit a less disreputable offender than the fraudulent jockey. The Irish public, if they are put to it, will make the one occupation as hazardous as the other."

I am not aware that *United Ireland* ever carried out its threat to publish a full list of the "lying brood." Probably a salutary fear of an action for libel counselled a more prudent course.

It may illustrate the reckless manner in which *United Ireland* gave utterance to its baseless charges if I give here an extract from the issue of the 12th of January, 1884. I however preface it by a narrative of an incident that occurred on the day to which the extract refers, namely, Sunday, the 6th of January, 1884. I had come to Tralee the preceding night. Next day about noon Mr. T. D. Sullivan, M.P., who had just arrived, entered the coffee room of the hotel in which I was staying. We had never been on unfriendly

terms, and he saluted me with the words, "Helloa, Dunlop, you here; were you ever in Tralee before?" I replied, "Oh, often," and then added, "I spent ten days in Tralee Jail." "Oh, then you're qualified to be a member." "I'm afraid not," I said, "for they let me in every morning and out in the evening." The explanation was that I had been present in 1880 during the trial of Messrs. Timothy and Edward Harrington, and eight or ten other residents of Tralee, for holding Land League courts in that town, a matter afterwards referred to in the Parnell Commission in London while I was present, the occasion being the reading of a letter from Mr. Broderick (the solicitor for the defendants) to the Executive of the Land League, saying that I was pressing for payment of my account for a special report of the trial. The trial was held in the prison, because of the disorderly conduct of the mob on the first day in the Courthouse. By holding the trial in the jail all opportunity of creating a disturbance was removed.

But to revert to the extract from *United Ireland* of the 12th of January, 1884. In that issue, after telling how the Executive Government took time by the forelock on the previous Sunday by releasing Mr. Edward Harrington at six o'clock in the morning instead of ten o'clock, an act which *United Ireland* described as being "as spiteful and ungracious as official malice could devise," it proceeded :—"The Dublin correspondent of *The Daily News*, Mr. Dunlop,

is not above chuckling over this contemptible ruse . . The little manœuvre which excited the mirth of Mr. Dunlop, and the domiciliary searches and parades of the police did not prevent the people of Tralee and the surrounding country from flocking around Mr. Harrington with their bands to welcome him back to freedom." In the next issue of the paper there appeared a paragraph apologising for the reference made to me, and adding that it was "founded on a mis description of the paragraph in question which we find on the whole to be a fair and uncoloured statement of facts." I afterwards learned from Mr. Timothy Harrington that it was he who called Mr. O'Brien's attention to the inaccuracy. How many of the numerous comments of *United Ireland* on my correspondence would have been discovered to be equally unfounded had there been a Mr. Harrington to take the trouble to correct them? I never took the slighest notice of any of them.

I may here dispose of Tralee by stating that on a subsequent occasion I was present at a National League meeting which was followed by a public dinner. Everything went well until the toast of "The Press" was proposed, coupled with my name. I replied in a very formal manner, adding that the duty of a reporter was to report impartially, and that I had made it a rule of my life to endeavour to do so. There were soon ominous sounds of dissent, hissing and cries of "Sit down." I knew I had many friends in Tralee, and some being present there were strong counter-cheers.

By the time I finished the few words I had to say bottles and glasses were beginning to fly between the contending factions; the other journalists and myself slipped quietly out of the room.

The following are extracts from *United Ireland* of the 31st of March, 1885 :—

> "If the G Divison would only make a swoop upon the Dublin correspondents of the London papers and put them beyond the frontier, they would be doing a much more effective stroke for England than breaking up the little coterie of Parisian wags and ready-writers who hoaxed John Bull with the picture of the nine dynamiters in congress assembled round the green table with revolvers and bowie-knives hovering in the air, an inventor of dynamite cannon in the background soliciting an order, and a newspaper reporter taking down the flowery, though sanguinary, peroration of the arch-dynamiter. Until the English Government gives the Patton crowd their walking papers from Dublin, it is in vain that the French police try to calm John Bull's nerves by taking the bread out of the mouths of the smaller fry of the profession who had been practising upon the old gentleman's gullibility with goose-quills dipped in dynamite."
>
> "Mr. A. J. Kettle's zeal in letter-writing will, perhaps, be moderated when he learns that his latest epistle has earned from Mr. Dunlop, in *The Daily News*, the compliment that Mr. Kettle is 'one of the most straightforward as well as one of the most able adherents of the Nationalist party in Ireland.' Mr. Dunlop also

> shares Mr. Kettle's indignation that a 'National Council' has not been formed by the tyrannical representatives of the Irish people; and who better qualified to judge what would be to the advantage of National unity"?

The same journal (*United Ireland*) in its issue of December 18th, 1885, writing apropos of the quashing of the jury panel at the Assizes at Sligo, at which the Woodford prisoners were afterwards tried, said :—

> "It is melancholy to think that so large a proportion of our Liberal friends in England get their Irish information from *The Daily News*, and *The Daily News* gets its Irish information from the virulent anti-Irish Scotchman, Mr. Dunlop, who had only a few days previous to the Assizes been ignominiously expelled from a Nationalist meeting in Sligo." [The true version of this occurrence has already been given.]

These attacks increased in virulence as time went on, but *The Daily News* took no notice of them. Even when that journal adopted Home Rule, following the example of Mr. Gladstone, the desire of the Irish Nationalist party to have me cashiered was not gratified. But the conspiracy was kept up. Unfounded complaints of suppression of news were made to the Managing Editor of the paper (Mr. J. R. Robinson). The matter which I was accused of suppressing had been cut out of my despatches in *The Daily News* sub-editorial department, a fact proved to the hilt by my

forwarding a certified copy of the telegram of the only despatch that was specifically complained of and acknowledged immediately by Mr. Robinson. Ultimately, in 1889, no other loop-hole being left, Mr. Robinson, pestered by the Nationalist party, was driven to say that they "must have someone as Dublin correspondent who would write in accordance with the tone of the paper," which meant that I should write in a tone favourable to Home Rule. This I declined to do and the connection was severed, with the result that I abandoned a very lucrative position which I had held for over twenty-one years.* I should add that when the paper became a Home Rule organ I simply sent the news, and did not "tone" my correspondence one way or the other. At the same time I contend that the toning is not only justifiable, but commendable, when it helps to point out the true significance of the events recorded.

The object of these unknown conspirators—a copy of one letter of complaint was sent to me without the name of the writer—was not merely to serve Home Rule but to secure the correspondentship for some favourite of their own. One man was appointed, but was allowed to hold it for only a few weeks, when he was ousted and another put in his place.

The above extracts are merely samples of the abuse

* My salary from *The Daily News* was £195 a year, and my average income from Special Correspondence to the same journal averaged £60 a year for a number of years.

showered on me by *United Ireland* for many years, at some periods almost every week, every one of the statements in the articles being practically without foundation.

Mr. O'Brien paid me the compliment, as I regarded it, of complaining to the Chief of *The Freeman* staff that I had, in my capacity of correspondent of *The Daily News*, done more to prevent Home Rule being granted than any other man in Ireland.

I should add that this gutter journalism was never indulged in by *The Nation*, or *The Weekly News*, the two weekly Nationalist contemporaries of *United Ireland*. These were owned by the Sullivan family, and although strongly advocating Home Rule and Land Reform, carefully avoided personalities.

An amusing incident occurred on one occasion at Carrickmacross. Evictions were going on, and I was present to describe the proceedings. It was the concluding day of the evictions, and Mr. O'Brien addressed a meeting held in the town. Nothing of interest occurred, and when the talking had finished the representative of another Dublin newspaper and myself proceeded to the railway station and took our seats in what turned out to be the only first-class compartment in the train. In a few minutes we heard a band playing National airs, and we at once divined that this was a "send-off" to Mr. O'Brien. Mr. O'Brien, who was at the head of the procession, walked up to the compartment, put one foot inside, and then, seeing who was in

it, halted suddenly, and turning round went into the second-class compartment immediately adjoining.

I am fully conscious that these are personal matters of little public interest; but I have endeavoured through life to combine honesty with journalism, and I have dwelt on this period of my career for the purpose of exposing the methods adopted by the Nationalists and by National journalists. How well Dr. Patton, with whom I was so frequently bracketed, did his duty to *The Times* was shown by the fact that he was retained in his position until his death many years later.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Old Newspaper and the New. The Party System. The Referendum.

During the earlier period of my residence in Glasgow the compulsory stamp on newspapers was still in existence, as was also the duty on advertisements and on paper. These were what Mr. Bright so persistently denounced as "taxes on knowledge." The phrase was usually combined with the taxes on "light" (windows of houses) and on "providence" (fire insurance policies). These have all disappeared. But it is only with the taxes affecting newspapers that we are here concerned. While yet these were all in operation, the almost universal price of newspapers was fourpence halfpenny, *The Times* was fivepence. The Glasgow papers were *The Glasgow Herald*, published twice weekly, and eventually three times; *The North British Mail*, published daily; and, for a few years, *The Glasgow Daily Mail*. There were also several weekly papers—the chief being *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The Glasgow Citizen*, *The Glasgow Examiner* and *The Reformers Gazette*, the latter published by a somewhat eccentric

local politician—Peter M'Kenzie. As to *The Glasgow Examiner*, a paragraph in the issue of *T. P.'s Weekly* for December 4th, 1908, in which a series of articles headed "Thus saith the Preacher" is promised, reminds me that in the early fifties *The Examiner* gave sketches, from week to week, of the more noted preachers of that day in Glasgow and the neighbourhood. The sketches were well written; the writer hit off with great ability the characteristics of the preacher and gave a brief but interesting resumé of his sermon. A lithographed portrait, usually a good likeness, on a separate sheet, and good enough for framing, was given free as a supplement to the paper. The series continued to be published for a considerable time, and must have largely increased the circulation of the journal; and in those days, despite the "taxes on knowledge," the circulation contributed a handsome profit, in many cases adding perhaps quite as much to the net revenue as did the advertisements.

The "taxes on knowledge" began to go in 1853, when that on advertisements—one shilling and sixpence for each, irrespective of length—was abolished. This was followed in June, 1855, by the abolition of the compulsory penny stamp. This step was the chief element in bringing about the great revolution in the newspaper world which then took place. The actual repeal of the tax was boldly anticipated by the publication of unstamped newspapers, the proprietors taking for granted that the Government would not prosecute.

Their faith was justified by the result. The object of the promoters was obviously to get an advantage over the previously existing papers, which, as far as I remember, observed the old law until the new one came into actual operation. In Glasgow two new ventures were started, *The Morning Bulletin* and *The Glasgow Daily News*. *The Bulletin* lasted for two or three years, and *The News*, I think, ultimately became an evening journal, now *The Glasgow Evening News*. *The Glasgow Herald* and *The North British Daily Mail* speedily got into line as regards price. *The Scotsman* made the change about the same time. The new issues of these old-established journals at the popular penny were very small sheets. What a contrast with the mammoth issues of the present day! My recollection is clearest with regard to the early issues of the penny *Scotsman*. It consisted of four very small pages, the entire sheet being only a little larger than a single page of the present day paper.

At this period I was in close intimacy with several Glasgow journalists, one being Mr. William Walker Scott, mentioned in an earlier chapter. He subsequently dropped the "Walker." In 1856 or 1857, he joined *The Glasgow Herald* and became Sub-editor. After a varied career, not confined to journalism, he became, in the early nineties, Editor of *The Southport Visiter*, a position which he continued to fill worthily until his death in or about 1905. Through him I met a few times, in Glasgow, a journalist of a type which,

in a certain respect, is now happily very rare; in another respect it is, unhappily, rarer still. M'Farlane was a Bohemian of the Bohemians, with a great liking for whiskey, but he was also a genius. It is recorded of him that at noon of the 25th of January, 1859—the centenary of the birthday of Robert Burns—he "stumbled" into a newspaper office in Glasgow soliciting employment. The proprietor handed him five shillings and requested him to write an ode on Burns, to be read at one of the banquets to be held in Glasgow that evening. He accomplished the task in good time, and handed to the chairman of the gathering an ode which, had it been produced in time for the competition, would have been at least a worthy competitor for the prize for the best ode on the subject, which had shortly before been awarded to Isa Craig. M'Farlane's ode is published in full in Nimmo's "Scottish Minstrelsy after Burns." I have said that the class of "Bohemians" to which M'Farlane belonged is now rare. When in London during the first nine months of the Parnell Commission I occasionally visited the "Cheshire Cheese," where I met most of the journalists who were in the habit of visiting that famous hostelry, and I do not remember meeting even one of the M'Farlane type.

I need hardly add that the last vestige of the "taxes on knowledge" was removed when the duty on paper, three halfpence a pound weight, was abolished. This, more than anything else, rendered possible the enormous

development of the newspaper press which has since taken place. Has this change, this enormous development been an unmixed blessing? Has it increased the influence of the press? Has it tended to make it a better guide in the formation of a sound public opinion? To these questions the answers will be framed according to the point of view from which the judgment is formed. The circulation of the principal London newspapers has, on the whole, increased immensely, and the same may be said of those published in the chief towns and cities of the United Kingdom. The revenue from the advertisements has also increased enormously; but at the same time the cost of production has increased to an extent which largely absorbs the increased revenue. The old high-priced papers were conducted with great ability. In that respect I think the general opinion of those who are old enough to remember, and have been sufficiently observant to enable them to judge, would be, that in these respects there has not been much, if indeed there has been any, improvement. The news supply has undoubtedly greatly increased, and in respect of what may be called, for want of a better title, "magazine matter," there has been a great improvement. In fact the development of this class of literature in newspapers has all taken place during the last thirty years or so; it had practically no existence in former times. Leading articles were then almost exclusively devoted to political subjects. The competition which naturally

arose between the old newspapers and the new ones which followed the abolition of the compulsory stamp resulted in the introduction of the Essay into the leading columns. *The Daily Telegraph* set the example by the publication of articles on social and other subjects, written by George Augustus Sala in the lively style peculiar to him, and in which no worthy successor has yet arisen. Eventually the Essay and the Special Article crept in, and now, in some of the best newspapers of the day, they are regular features. The two weekly supplements to *The Times*, ENGINEERING and LITERATURE, are also a modern development. As to foreign news the supply is more prompt. *The Times* of fifty years ago was, on the average, quite as large and contained as much reading matter and as many advertisements as it now contains. The only difference is that most of the news appears the day immediately succeeding the event, instead of a week, or a month, or perhaps, as in the case of Australia or New Zealand, two or three months later. Up to the time of the laying of the cable between Valentia and the United States the "heads" of the news from America were telegraphed from Queenstown on the arrival there of the mail or other steamers, and this state of things continued all through the period of the war between North and South.

With all these improvements in the news supply there is one respect in which a doubt whether the newspaper press has improved may be reasonably entertained. I have no desire to pose as a censor of

the newspaper press, but I am not at all certain that the newspaper has improved in the matter of independence in its criticisms of men and affairs. An impression exists in the minds of many who are accustomed to closely scrutinise matters of this kind that there is a tendency on the part of many newspapers to subordinate the free expression of opinion to the exigencies of profit-earning. Be this as it may, it appears to me that "the power of the press" to influence the minds of the people is not as great as it was half a century ago. This is deeply to be regretted. A newspaper, of course, is a commercial enterprise, as is so often said; but so, in a sense, is the clerical profession; yet both owe a duty to the community, not merely to refrain from leading the people astray, but to do the positive work of leading them in the right path. In numerous cases this duty seems to be shirked in order to evade the possibility of giving offence to any class of supporters. In a word there is a great want of out-spokenness.

But the newspapers are not the only offenders. The party system of Government is mainly responsible for this disregard of conscience in political matters. All who remember what happened when Mr. Gladstone suddenly announced his change of front on the question of Home Rule for Ireland, remember also, no doubt, how the great bulk of his party followed him as a flock of sheep follows the bell-wether. A more discreditable proceeding than this wholesale conversion it is im-

possible to imagine. No matter which party it may be that commits itself to tactics such as were adopted on that occasion their conduct must meet with the severest condemnation from all honest men. But censurable as was the conduct of Mr. Gladstone and his followers on this occasion, it was not a whit worse than the sudden "conversion" of the English Liberal newspapers on the same occasion. I say the English Liberal newspapers, because the Scotch Liberal newspapers did not exhibit the same elasticity of conscience, the most conspicuous example being the steadfastness of *The Scotsman* to its former anti-Home Rule creed. In Ireland, also, the only two really Liberal papers in the country—*The Northern Whig* and *The Derry Standard*—stood firm for Unionism; all the rest of the so-called Liberal papers in Ireland had long before been tied to the Nationalist creed. The other bright spot in connection with this period was the refusal of a large and influential section of the Liberal party, led by the Marquis of Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain and others, to join in following the bell-wether.

On the other hand I have just as little liking for the action of a large section of the Unionist party in their sudden conversion to that vague, indefinite thing called Tariff Reform. The great majority of the Unionist papers, following the bad example set them by the English Liberal papers in 1886, deserted their Free Trade principles and followed Mr. Chamberlain's new "constructive" policy, which, if it means anything,

means Protection. I deeply regret that Mr. Balfour has given the movement even a tentative support; but I take some comfort from the fact that he has for such a lengthened period refrained from committing himself to any definite scheme of Tariff Reform. My own opinion is that if the Unionists persist in keeping this millstone round their necks they will have a longer period of relief from the cares of office than the Liberals experienced during the years following the General Election of 1894.*

It will, I hope, be obvious to my readers that I have not introduced this or any subject from a party point of view, but as illustrating, in a remarkable manner, the mischief arising from our present system of party government, a mischief which might at least be mitigated if not wholly prevented by a little more independence, a little more grit, on the part of the newspaper press.

Everything went fairly well in the Dublin newspaper world after the repeal of the "taxes on knowledge." The first penny daily morning newspaper in Ireland was, I think, *The Irish Times*, which was started in

* The above was written in December, 1908. The position remains much the same at present (1911). Recently Mr. Balfour has modified his position in regard to a tax on grain, which, he says, he is now of opinion should not apply to wheat imported from the Colonies. It is quite obvious that the Leader of the Unionist party is in reality opposed to the Tariff Reform movement *in toto*. The action of both political parties in the "conversions" referred to reminds one of the father and five children who all slept in one bed, and when it was asked how they managed to turn round the explanation was given, "When father says 'turn' we all turn."

1857 or 1858 by Major Knox, and soon became a formidable rival to the previously existing dailies—*The Freeman's Journal*, *The Daily Express* and *Saunders' Newsletter*. *The Irish Times* is now, and has been for years, well in front of all its contemporaries. *The Daily Express* and *The Freeman's Journal* soon adopted the popular penny, but *Saunders' Newsletter* did not fall into line until the end of 1861 or the beginning of 1862. It ultimately paid the penalty of not marching with the times when, twelve or fifteen years later, it ceased to exist, but not until it had changed hands more than once.

The next stir in the newspaper world in Dublin arose out of what was known as the "Parnell Split," an event which considerably injured *The Freeman's Journal*. That paper at first took the side of Parnell in the controversy, which was conducted with great bitterness. The result was that *The National Press* was started. Then *The Freeman's Journal* threw over Parnell, and by purchasing *The National Press* extinguished that organ. But Parnell had a following considerable in numbers and determined in attitude, and without much delay the *Irish Daily Independent* was started by the Parnellite party, with John Redmond as its head. *The Irish Daily Independent* never reached paying point, and eventually it was converted by Mr. William Murphy, formerly a Member of Parliament for an Irish constituency, into a halfpenny morning paper.

I had at that time considerable knowledge of the characteristics of the responsible conductors of the various Dublin newspapers, and I may venture to express the opinion that if Mr. E. Dwyer Gray had been alive at the time there would have been no split, or, at all events, it would not have assumed the proportions it eventually attained. *The Freeman's Journal* has paid no ordinary dividend for the last three years ; and no preference dividend for the last two years.

I think I have amply justified the position I have taken in this matter. As I have already said I have no desire to take up the role of censor of the press, and I cheerfully admit that there are honourable exceptions. On the whole, having regard to the wobbling displayed by a large number, I confess that I have a growing inclination to support the view expressed many years ago by Mr. John Bright, that it would be better if newspapers confined themselves to news and refrained from comment.

In a paper which, as already stated, I had the privilege of reading at the Annual Conference of the Institute of Journalists, held at Cardiff, in 1897, and which was printed in the "Proceedings" of the Institute, I took up the same attitude as I do now. The paper was on "Reporters and Reporting," and in that I said :—"To reporters I would say, keep before you a "high ideal . . . . The profession is an honour-"able one, and as an eminent Queen's Counsel said at "an Institute dinner in Dublin, 'Guard its honour.' Be

"truthful . . . Avoid sensationalism when used "in the sense of exaggeration, and that is what it "usually means. Be careful to record facts accurately "and impartially, and thus assist in providing a true "record of the times in which we live." The President of the Institute (Mr. M'Lean, M.P.) speaking after the reading of the paper said :—"I don't think it is "possible for them (the reporters) always to act up to "the moral code which Mr. Dunlop has laid down, "because, as a previous speaker said, they have "instructions to obey, and very often the instructions "even of editors of daily papers vary from those very "high moral sentiments. I hope you will be content "if reporters act up to the usually expected standard "of moral obligations amongst the average people of "the country."

Since the Cardiff Conference fourteen years have passed, and I am glad to say that almost every President of the Institute since that time has, in his inaugural address, adopted quite as "high a moral tone" in regard to the conducting of newspapers, and has unfavourably criticised the present condition of affairs in that respect.

As to the party system in politics it is, in my opinion, the curse of the country, and if not abolished it will surely bring about the ruin of the State. I may be asked what I would substitute for government by party. I answer, first, that, in my opinion, no system could be worse than the present one; and second, divorce the Executive

Government from the legislative machine. Why should not the members of the Executive be appointed permanently, or for a fixed term, subject to removal on some such terms as judges are removable at present ?

In support of these views I ask, could there be a greater burlesque of the true principle upon which *legislation* by a Parliament which is, supposed to be, representative, ought to be conducted than what occurred in the sittings immediately after the General Election in January, 1910 ? Parties were so evenly balanced that the Irish Nationalists were able to turn the scale either way. Nothing was said about Home Rule in the earlier stages of the election ; but Mr. Redmond and his colleagues, believing that they could squeeze Mr. Asquith so as to make him at least promise to grant Home Rule, determined to support the Liberal candidates in the boroughs in England and Scotland, and asked their sympathisers to vote for them. They voted under orders ; their leaders having probably interpreted Mr. Asquith's attitude as one which warranted them in adopting the course they did. But as soon as the borough elections were over, Mr. Asquith and the Chief Liberal Whip, Mr. Pease, publicly repudiated the suggestion that the Home Rule question was a factor in the elections. Even this, however, failed to prevent a heavy Liberal loss in the elections which followed the declaration. The result was a state of parties which left the Liberal Government at the mercy of Mr. Redmond and his party, a party the one settled

principle of which is not to vote according to their conscience on the question that may be at issue, but to vote in such a way as to embarrass any Government which will not concede what they demand, a matter which, as everyone knows, was practically settled by the result of the General Election of 1895, which so emphatically affirmed the decision of the House of Lords rejecting Mr. Gladstone's second Home Rule Bill.

Mr. Redmond's eagerness to obtain a pledge from Mr. Asquith to abolish the House of Lords' right of veto was obviously due, not to his fear that the Lords would reject a Home Rule Bill, as they would be quite entitled to do, but to what I have not the least doubt was his firm conviction, that that rejection would be affirmed, as in 1895, on an appeal to the constituencies. His object clearly was, and is, to get Home Rule by pressure on a party which requires his votes, no matter whether the party believes in Home Rule or not. Nobody knows better than Mr. Redmond that it was not the House of Lords that killed the Home Rule Bill of 1904, but the "will of the people" as declared in 1905 upon the sole issue then put before them, preceded by the ridicule cast upon the measure during the debates (especially the later stages of the discussion) in the House of Commons. Nobody knows better than Mr. Redmond that if, in 1895, a clear majority—one hundred and fifty would not have been needed—had been returned in favour of Home Rule the measure, or a similar one, would have been passed by the House of

Lords. Nobody knows better than Mr. Redmond that if the House of Lords rejected another Home Rule Bill, and a clear majority was afterwards returned to the House of Commons in favour of such a measure the Lords would accept it. In 1895 the "will of the people" rejected Home Rule, and up to the present it stands against Home Rule; and if any regard is to be had to the elementary principles of constitutional government, that decision must stand until it is reversed by a clear and unmistakable majority in favour of a Home Rule bill which has passed the House of Commons. It is because Mr. Redmond knows that he is never likely to obtain such a reversal that he is now seeking to destroy the House of Lords, in order that there may be no possibility of ascertaining the "will of the people" on the single issue clearly put before the country.

I have thus endeavoured to show in, I think, a striking form, the great disadvantages of the party system. I do not disguise from myself the difficulties in the way of its abolition, but I think I have put briefly, yet clearly, the necessity for a completely independent Second Chamber, so long, at all events, as the party system exists.

The preceding paragraph was written immediately after the General Election of January, 1910. I do not see that the conduct of Mr. Asquith, immediately before and during the General Election of December, 1910, has improved his position, or re-habilitated his reputation for straight-forwardness.

This brings me to the question of the Referendum—a question which has become a matter of public discussion since the preceding pages were written. If the Referendum could be made to work satisfactorily with the present system of party government, and of general elections fought on several issues, frequently important ones, it might be desirable to adopt it. But how would it work? Take either or both of the General Elections held in 1910. That in January was held mainly on the question of the Budget, Unionism and Tariff Reform. There were many in Ireland—in fact, it may be said, the whole of the Nationalists—who refused to vote against the Government, although they strongly disapproved of the Budget; the reason being that the Government had openly bribed the Nationalist party with a promise of a Home Rule Bill. There were many also, all over the United Kingdom, who refused to vote against the Government and for Unionism, because Tariff Reform, *alias* Protection, was bracketed with Unionism, although not a single prominent member of the Unionist party—Mr. Chamberlain can no longer be so described—seems to have had any part in starting what has been so persistently described as the constructive policy of the party. My own opinion is that the Government would have been defeated had not the Unionist party been weighted by this millstone of Tariff Reform, and that even the bribe of the promised Home Rule Bill would not have served the Radical Ministry.

Suppose, then, that the question of Home Rule had, after the election, been referred as a single issue to the electors, and that the votes against Home Rule exceeded those in its favour, what would be the position? Would Mr. Asquith's Government be expected to resign? It could scarcely be expected to do so immediately after a General Election in which they had obtained a very substantial majority. Would they not be justified in saying, "We got a majority on our general programme and we shall not resign, but will continue in office so long as we retain the support of those who were elected to support us."

A position of a similar extraordinary character would have arisen if Tariff Reform were referred to the electors as a single issue, and if a majority supported that somewhat vague plank in the Unionist platform. In that event, a Free Trade Government which on the mixed issues had received the largest amount of support, would undoubtedly refuse to become Protectionists.

But there is a still more serious difficulty in the way of conjoining the Referendum with our present system of party Government. The more serious difficulty arises from the fact that whether the Budget, Unionism, or Tariff Reform were "referred," the electors would probably vote as they had voted at the preceding election; the supporters of the Government at the election would support them in the Referendum, and the opponents of the Government would vote against them. Of what value then would the Referendum be?

I am heartily in favour of the Referendum if it would be of any practical use, but I cannot see that it would, so long as the party system exists. I may add that if the party system were abolished and a system introduced which would present no inducement to Members of the Legislature to vote against the dictates of their conscience, there would be no necessity for the Referendum. It ought not to be beyond the power of able and honest men to devise some system that would bring about such a result.

Meanwhile, if the Unionists want a constructive instead of a destructive policy let them adopt that of retrenchment. The National expenditure might easily be reduced by twenty or perhaps thirty millions, chiefly by a reduction of the expenditure on the Civil Service, beginning with a very substantial reduction in the salaries of Cabinet Ministers, a reduction which would relieve them from the duty of "entertaining" —one of the worst forms of bribery. As to the lower branches of the Civil Service, a large saving could be effected by reducing the numbers employed in the various offices, a step which might make it necessary for those who are left to do some work. Further the "sixty-five" rule ought to be abolished. It is not applied in judicial offices, and the judiciary has not deteriorated. The rule has added largely to the pension list. There could be no difficulty created by a change making "sixty-five" the earliest age for compulsory retirement.

I am no believer in the teaching of journalism outside of the newspaper office. I recognise, of course, the necessity for all journalists receiving a good general education; but as to special teaching, either in schools or universities, the thing is, in my opinion, absurd. I say this without relation to the vexed question of remuneration for journalistic work. If a man is going to be an editor, or a leader-writer, or a good reporter he must have a good education. But let not anyone fancy for a moment that in return for his being educated up to the hilt he has anything more than a very remote prospect of getting any very comfortable livelihood by journalism. Editorships of important newspapers—newspapers whose proprietors are prepared to give a large salary—do not become vacant every day, and when they do the position is frequently filled by someone who has risen from the ranks, and who has a thorough knowledge of every department of journalistic work. Educate by all means; but no special education in journalism can ever be imparted outside the newspaper office. Meantime, while admitting that there are many journalists whose education is deplorably defective, I suggest that it might be well for the owners of newspapers to consider whether a higher scale of payment would not automatically bring into the profession men who have received at least a good general education.

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